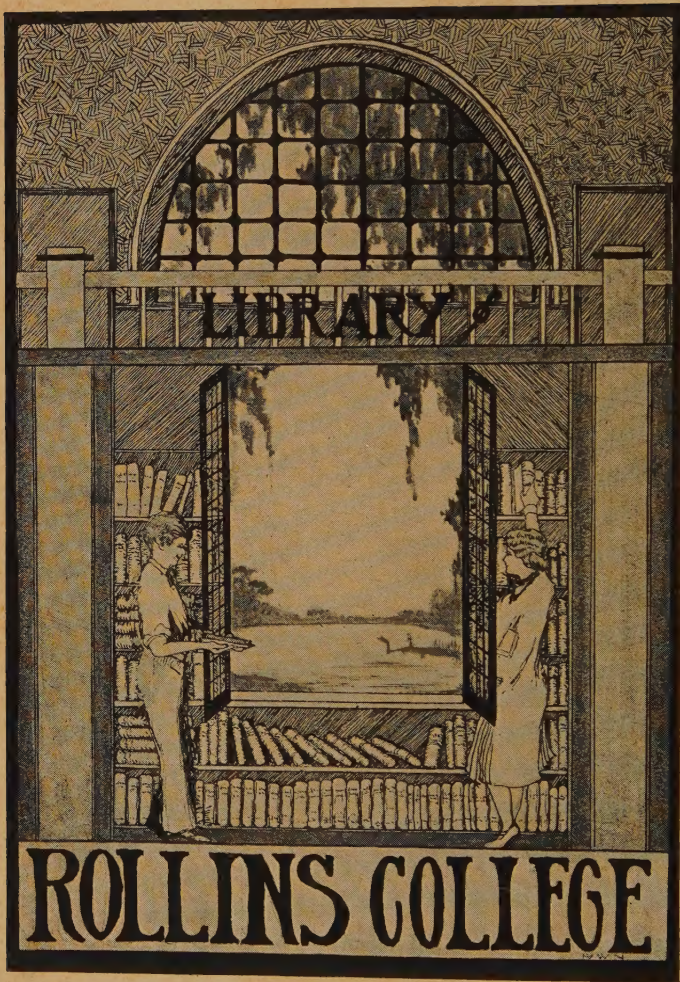


The Gift of

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AN ISLAND IN TIME

❖ *An Island in Time* ❖

Charted by Sirov of Kanakir

BY

Henry Chester Tracy



NEW HAVEN

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AUTHOR'S NOTE

THE places mentioned in this book are authentic localities on the map. In one case—Phazimon—the classical name replaces a modern corrupted form.

The word Hayq is philologically correct and is acceptable to a people who trace their ancestry to a hero of that name. Mythical or not, he has a real existence in their national consciousness, and his name carries something of the pure tradition of that race: one which it has had scant opportunity to impress on alien minds.

Few Westerners, since Haxthausen, have seen the Hayq intimately at home and in their distant patriarchal haunts. To the casual European, meeting only trader, adventurer, peasant, the charm and dignity of their culture do not appear. At its best it has a quality that cannot be conveyed but by a severe and restrained narrative of personal life. The background of desert and peril and tragedy looms so large that one cannot attend to the trivial in that life. On the other hand, there is the majestic beauty of an arid

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plateau; it somehow colors the narrative of a life. It is impossible to think of the wind-blown barrens of that highland, whether Kurdish or Armenian, as "scenery." This, with the hoary patriarchal mode that existed there, gives sanction to a certain elevation in style.

"——That existed": the old culture, one supposes, has vanished as surely as all the other civilizations that are gone; leaving what? Only an impress on human character, and on the imagination of those who knew it. That is the contribution made by the culture of the Hayq. It carries, much as Ararat carries its snows, something of the majesty of simple human being, unobscured by the smoke-clouds of the western world.

Peace may come, and political restoration; but with these will come modernity and machines and the cinema. What has vanished can never be restored.

CONCERNING SIROV

I knew him long ago. We got up early together to see the world, and found it good; because there was morning in it, and a mystery in the near-by hills.

Sirov lived in the border of a town, and in that town were filthy streets, because cleaning departments were unknown: but suddenly, through hail-fall, those streets would be sprinkled with white pearls. Again, sun shone on the barrier of mud walls, and on the old red tiles of the roofs. There was an affection in that natural light. Sirov caught the contagion and was alight at the heart.

It was just that natural light which browns the grape-clusters in the vineyards clear of the town, and ripens wheat, cheers earth, and approximates heaven—for such as he.

From being much at home with that light, Sirov learned to bridge various moats and gulfs into which others fall. But over his bridges there was no thoroughfare for heavy-foot thoughts or the wheeled vehicles of the mind, with their accretions of care. If those who have crossed and returned safely have

CONCERNING SIROV

little to show, do not chide them: where are the sunbeams of last year?

I could envy Sirov, as I knew him, and wish that it were again time to be born, and that I might choose his lot. It was a good one: illumined, and with far horizons, and yet lived humbly; as the cornel cherry by the wayside, or grape hyacinth on a slope in the sun.

THE SONG OF LACHESIS

"The spindle turns on the knees of Necessity; and on the upper surface of each circle is a siren, who goes round with them, hymning a single sound and note.

. . .

There is another band, three in number, each sitting upon her throne: these are the Fates, the daughters of Necessity . . . who accompany the voices of the sirens;—Lachesis singing of the past, Clotho of the present, Atropos of the future." Plato, The Republic.

I AM in love with a land.

I am in love with a world bounded by hills, centering in a plain. I would not willingly exchange it for any valley of beauty that I have known, and yet I possess it only in this strange way: it was bequeathed to me for my daytime dream.

It was a reality to me, once: a new world to which I had come; but even then the past lay about it, in deep sleep, and one seemed—or rather I seem now—to have been a part of that dream. All about it rose the hills, which to see is to love. They were bare, but not of a desolate bareness; merely a replacing of trees by those tussocks of gray and

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green, or those creeping junipers that know how to endure the long sun. With this close garment the ground is delicately mottled, and its contours softened while they are being molded by rains. The dawn likes to linger on these moldings, and they give back a gladness to the eye; as in snow-time, when there is a radiance of pure wonder, on the nearest mountain: the snow lies there, new-fallen, in that broken light. In broad noon, even, there is a serenity, and at night a mystery without fear.

The plain itself is a strangeness never exhausted, and a familiarity that never repels: a strangeness, because its values are not of a piece with its topography, and have never been fully explored. It feeds many bodies. It has fed mine. It sustains the flesh of my personal enemies—if I have any; at least of those who desire to destroy my race, and therefore, in common parlance, are foes. I feel no enmity against them. I wonder that things are as they are. This plain of which I speak certainly sustained the ancestors of these usurpers, when they swarmed down from the savage valleys of the Tien-shin, as I shall show. Before that it sustained mine.

THE SONG OF LACHESIS

It was not my birthplace—for I am speaking now of the plain of Phazimon, which was not my early home—and yet it grew upon me, and became my inheritance: and of that, as such, not even the race-slayers can deprive me. The thing I possess, which is a reality, must seem to them like a continent in the air. Indeed it has often seemed to me that while they quarrel among themselves and with all Europe, in regard to a topography, I have all that's worth keeping; I hold, unimperilled, a desirable *Lifted Land*, to which I have access in spite of their brawls.

Now if this is true to my private consciousness, it is equally true that the place is open to others who care to use the same key. There are no conflicting claims. But to record what I have to tell is not a bald process. History cannot preserve so atmospheric a thing. On the other hand, there is trouble among the fiction-makers. I feel that here is a reality more cogent than they, the moderns, are exploiting for their various ends. One hears the strident calls of the venders, hawking strange wares. They show curious phials, shaped by a cunning and an art, but there is

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death in their anodynes, weariness in their perfumes. Their confections are drugged. Knowing this from the sadness of living I have closed my eyes. I have withdrawn myself from the street. The song of Lachesis is in my ears. I am content; for the things I celebrate are real things.

I do not pose as spokesman for the Hayq, whom the Arabians called *Armen*; but I shall be supported by the genius of that race when I say this:

It has never been our wont to beat our heads against the wall and bewail the immobility of our fate. Denuded of all that we valued in vineyards and homes, we have been allowed, by our own destiny, to hold the kingdom of our souls. We shall not call ourselves pitying names. Richer peoples have lost that kingdom before now.

ZANGA GARDENS

I COUNT it a good fortune to have begun my first memories on the plain of the Araxes, in a village near Erivan. For, merely to open one's eyes there, or to look out over the roof-tops, is a lesson in spaciousness. Between the dome of Ararat on our south and the crests of Ala Goz on the north lay a wideness like the sea, but a tinting of earth-colors seen in depths of air.

It is the cradle of our antiquity; not of the Hayq only, but of all mankind. Is it a perverse fate that maintains in so vast a sterility that nest of gardens, that ribbon of rice-fields about Erivan? Or is it by some design that this fertile upland stands arrested, a picture of the world in the days of Nuh?

Preserve it, Spirit of Earth. This arid upland is not, as some might think, the jest of the Daimon, the plaything of Time: it is a mortuary where history lies embalmed. But in that burning valley of the Aras, which the summer sun searches from end to end, men sleep oblivious of the pageant, and on the flat roofs women wake just at sun-burst, to

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shake the draperies from their shoulders and feel the coolness of a morning wind that has flowed all night from the mountains to give one cool breath to the town.

My home was in Kanakir, a village blessed by streams which are the strands of the River Zanga, a braid of channels lost in the luxuriance it sustains. It was my father's choice, rather than the more pretentious suburb where the villas of the merchants are reared.

It is ten leagues to the birth of Zanga in that fresh, Alpine sea which your map shows as the Gokcha Lake. Ten leagues; and from its high source in solitude and wonder that stream brings "feeding water" to the town; waters gardens and turns the stones that grind our grain. Thence it falls to the Aras below Erivan.

Only from such sources spring the ribbons of green that seem to conjure, in ephemeral beauty, some lost Eden that once graced the earth. Elsewhere, as on the flanks of Ala Goz, the villages are buried, half underground, sad habitations of Tartar and Kurd. It is the men of the Zanga gardens, noble families of the Hayq (for certainly a no-

ZANGA GARDENS

bility is there, although the titles have all been buried by the storms) who know the blessing of verdure and of the abundance of birds. I cannot redeem that lost inheritance; yet I feel that it is mine, so long as consciousness gives back to me in a true, animate form, the wimple of that water, the shadow of those trees. From starling-song (bird iridescent!) to nightingale-gloom the thing is mine. I may thread those trees with the gold of orioles, sow that verdure with hoopoe calls.

I have said that my father chose this place rather than the villa sites of Erivan. That was because he cared to be near these life-givers rather than to use them as the formal decorations of his home. It is true that he employed the labor of five men to maintain the orchards around our private abode; but not for ostentation. One great group of fruit-trees he kept for the use of strangers, since the hill villages had none of their own. These children of hardship were invited to gather freely the yield of this ground, and a wealth of it was always exposed at the door.

He himself, although his business was in the town, took some part in the care of the trees; for (he said) "to withdraw too far

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from the sources of life is to lose the secret of the water and the ground, which ought to be cherished"; and he taught us to do the same.

By a pillared front one entered our hall. This was high and wide, a place for the reception of guests. Its walls were of a volcanic stone, light but durable in the dry air of that plain. At the sides were niches—a feature peculiar to the east—and, above, a gallery adorned with arabesques. At the back was the deep platform with its wide divan, which ran the entire length of the wall. From the two sides of this hall doors opened, to the family rooms and the alcove where were the *ojaks* or hooded fireplaces where, on burning charcoal, food was prepared.

In the court beyond was the spacious oven which was filled and fired till a week's supply of loaves could brown themselves on the floor of brick; or, it might be, a whole lamb could roast; or jars of a cereal, baked with meat. There were storerooms for the boiled, dried wheat; for grape-clusters, hung from the roof; for dried mulberries, apples, pears; for the fresh and fragrant quince; vats for the salted olives, black, wrinkled and rich;

ZANGA GARDENS

dried and aromatic meats; St. John's bread; walnuts from our grove and filberts from the port of Ordou. In deep earthen jars filled with brine lay the tender leaves of the eastern grape, to be used for the dish called *dolma*. It is a Homeric pleasure to remember these things, which make home a storehouse of the earth and bring near to one the joys native to our life. It is pleasant to remember that the women of our home found a congenial occupation with these things, and not in disputations corroding to the soul; not smothering the emptiness in their hearts with news of jealousies, murder and divorce; not even in the vaunted "romance" which is a confection of the western world.

We must disappoint you of the glamour of romance. It does not color the fabric of our lives, which can't be falsified to feed the market of books—a market already glutted with that stock.

Romantic contacts—I know them well; but I leave them for the lure of homes and gardens, for the plains and mountains I have known since first I woke to consciousness in "Zanga Groves" and learned to call my father *Hairig*.

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OURS has been a vexed footing in this world. Yet it is marvellous what a sense of security was upon my early home; and not all illusion. It was a time of peace. *Hairig* had the confidence of all with whom he had dealings. He had the respect of Circassian and Kurd. (But for the machinations of degenerates at the Capital our peace would not have been disturbed.) These half-wild men understand honor, joined to a dynamic like that of my foster-sire. He had thunderbolts that he held in leash. Even the dervishes, who fear no man, stood aside to let him pass.

Among our rulers there were none like him. They were figure-heads, inflated with power; pompous effigies, inspired from behind. At best they understood intrigue and the taking of bribes. You may well ask what my father did there, tolerating this fiasco of a rule. Why did he not leave it? Had he no knowledge of a Europe, or of a still wider West?

One must reply that he had. One must

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own that he had his weakness: he loved his faith and nation, and the usages of that home. Call it a fatal weakness. Let him be martyred for it. Do not pity him. Merely admit that these things are so.

He had visited the capitals of Europe. Before faring to those distant parts he had interviewed our venerable patriarch at Echmiadzin and received his blessing, having promised that he would be true to the faith which the Hayq place on one plane with their nation and their hearth. This trinity of bonds he held sacred, and, what is more, loved. This brought him unscathed through those temptations that have allured our lesser natures, to the damage of our good name. His own integrity returned him to his obscure home, while our avarice has been advertised abroad by small traders who would exploit the world.

I grant it a weakness to have buried his endowment, which was great, in that remote fastness, near to the origins of the world. He was unprophetic. But who could have foretold that a *modern Vandal* would break forth from his long broodings in the heart of Europe, and ravage the world; that he would

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seek to align with his mechanism of destruction the old malice of the Mongol and the Turk? Your own West had planted schools on the near-eastern crater edge, not expectant of lava-flows. Europe had desired concessions that would bind our western ports to Bagdad. There was the promise and the very breath of development, not of assassination in the air.

So it came about that my foster-father tended his looms and his stamping-blocks in Erivan, making *yashmaks* of a durable goods for the women of the Araxes plain and all its wide circuit of hills. Also he was a magistrate of Kanakir, and an easer of frictions, a man of repute. He entertained honorable guests: travellers, diplomats, men of new nations and of old. It was a good life.

Surely it was a good life when you compare it with the old, from which we have emerged. This was brought to me for the first time when an English traveller stopped at our home. Now the visit of a European was something of an event, and my eyes studied his motions, his face. Soon, however, I found that my ears were taking in the remarks which his interpreter was translating,

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after the words of etiquette had been delicately exchanged.

I was greatly drawn to this man, who spoke with a vigor and yet with a restraint, as he told of the ruins he had seen, of our ancient cities, to the north. Almost as if it were the story of his own people, he talked with an enthusiasm of the history of Ani, the capital of our mediæval kings. Of our rulers before the coming of Krikor, who converted our first prince, he thought them little better than barbarians, judging from the fate of the saintly maiden Ripsimé, to whom (and to her martyred companions) chapels were erected, which he had seen. But in the deserted city of Ani he had encountered proofs of a high culture; fine architecture and noble sights, which glowed with the magic of his discourse and with the learning he brought to his aid. He understood far more of our early history than we did, and could treat it with an understanding heart; so that as to the respective blame of our kings and that of the Byzantine Cæsars, for the cataclysm of the centuries after the tenth, he could mete justice and weigh with discrimination. My family were charmed.

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As for me, it was my first vivid flash of that picture, that overwhelming pageant, in which Christian Armenia battled with Seljuk and Tartar at the bridge between Asia and the western world.

And although I have grieved often and often, to reflect that we failed, and were in part blamable for the failure, to hold our gates against the horde, I was stirred then, I am stirred now, by the thought of that transient glory which was over our court at Ani, in its one breathing space, in the years. That space was in the days of Abas, on whose reign there shone a mild light after dreadful storms. Behind him was the troubled century of the martyr, Sembat, and the record of noble Armenian youths following in his footsteps, refusing life at the price of fidelity, declaring proudly, "We are Christians, we believe in God who is truth, and who dwells in the midst of Light without limits." In those days John Katholikos, unable to find security even in his own castle on the lake Sevan, fleeing to the court at Bagaran wrote his annals, declaring:

"Who can foretell our future? Spare me the attempt. We are like a harvest reaped by

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bad husbandmen amidst encircling gloom and cloud."

An apt figure, for a people who could say, in those years:

"We sow, but we do not reap; we plant, but gather not the fruit; the fig-tree bears not, the vine and the olive are barren. We collect a little and abandon the rest."

But after Abas, in the reign of Ashot, crops were gathered and vines tended, trees pruned. The king Ashot himself subdued Hamdun, the emir of the Arabs, thus winning the favor of the Caliph of Bagdad, who sanctioned and confirmed his crown. In his reign Phokas, the Byzantine general, anticipated the crusades; and Zimeskes, the capable Armenian, led the Greek armies and later himself ruled beneficently as Emperor, prior to the decay of the Constantinople throne.

It was then that the city of Ani rose to influence and power. A hundred thousand lived within its limits or in the shelter of its protecting walls. A cathedral was erected in that royal city, and a Church of the Illuminator, in the Valley of Flowers. Of the cathedral, our friend told us circumstantially, of

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its simplicity of design, in which he yet found a grandeur beyond the western architecture of that time. Built by able masons it still stood, in the dry air of the desert, a monument to the aspirations of our race.

But although our Prince David had successfully held the Moslems at Melazkert, and our united power might have discouraged their further advance, dissension came among us, with the personal greed of one Ashot, a younger prince, who, after the death of his father, forced a division upon John, the generous heir to the crown. By that means two kingdoms rose where one should have been; and between them, jealousies; so that at the moment of a new onslaught from Asia, the rock of our resistance was broken, our strength disintegrating in civil quarrels.

In his estimate of these the English savant was very generous, reminding us that in all lands there are traitors and there is greed. Further, in discoursing of the new wave of Seljuks at the border, he told that the Hayq were ill prepared for the savage horde. Against it they moved with swords, but were met by archers in swarms—wild men, with

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hair streaming in the wind. Even though their few strongholds might stand, these hordes must sweep over the plain, lay siege to the towns, and eventually enter our refugees, armed with knives.

I *saw* these wild men, as he spoke. I saw their hair streaming, their bow-strings pulled to the ear, their arrows showering upon our men, who, though brave, could not strike an enemy who hovered and fled, who vanished and returned.

I was stirred by the story of our glories and of our woes. I was also moved to a thoughtfulness I had not known. Surely if the sword could not maintain our glory undimmed, there might be some other means within mortal reach; and that means I determined to explore.

And the Englishman, noting my absorbed attention, smiled. He called me to him, saying, "Would you like to study these things?" When I nodded my affirmative he turned to my father, asking, "Shall you give him a chance?"

Hairig replied: "How can I? Our rulers do not permit us to carry instruction beyond the primary schools."

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The visitor replied, "There are schools to the west of you that carry it higher, having obtained an imperial *firman*." My father received that hint most thoughtfully. In time it bore fruit.

Wishing to show his appreciation of the westerner's courtesy in his estimate of our historic place, the head of our house invited him to dinner on the following night. He was able to accept.

As before, I studied this man, his manners, his distinction. Without analyzing the thing I knew that somehow he was superior, in himself. What it was that marked him, never having heard the meaning of the word "gentleman," I had little notion; but I had a desire to learn. I was to find, in the course of time, that it is a liberal education to understand the meaning of that one word.

This *gentleman*, then, as I now recognize him to have been, adapted himself with good humor to the customs of our home, including one which must have reminded him of that passage in Homer where Telemachus and his friend are received in the halls of Helen's spouse.

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“They sat on chairs by Menelaus the son of Atreus. And a handmaiden bare water for the hands in a goodly golden ewer, and poured it forth over a silver basin to wash withal; and to their side she drew a polished table, and a grave dame bare food and set it by them, and laid on the board many dainties.”

The first part of this, save that the vessels were of copper, pictures the service that was performed for his benefit by one of our young “brides.” The second part—the drawing up of the table, could not have been carried out without departing from the established usages of our land. This my father was unwilling to do; therefore a mat of rushes was spread on the platform near the divan, and upon that a clean linen cloth. Sliced loaves were laid at each place, and large silver spoons. A single dish appeared at each course. Cushions relieved the hardness of the floor. Our guest had already observed that the Hayq maintain a degree of silence during the repast, out of respect for good food, and in that he acquiesced, even approving the practice, by a word.

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I am loyal to the traditions of these foods of ours. They sustain body and—I should think also—soul. For there seems to be no schism in their compounding. The elements do not quarrel. When we say a food is “*hamov*,” we mean more than its “having taste”: it expresses in some way that zest which is a part of life, and which our matrons are able to convey to food.

After the meal our guest disposed himself once more, at our invitation, in the place of honor at the divan or *sedir*, which occupies the end of the hall. The *chibouk* pipes were produced and the men smoked. It is the atmosphere of geniality and repose.

Alluding to our gardens the *Effendi* said:

“Your ideal of a proper environment is something like that of the Koran. Does it not say there that the faithful shall have reserved for them habitations sustained by flowing streams, while for the unbeliever is reserved boiling water and baked ground?”

To me, now, that notion of boiling water seems an excellent jest; but at the time it seemed to me a severe thing to be meted by the Moslem seer to any who should refuse his words.

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This idea of Paradise and gardens led perhaps to the mention of Semiramis, who, our friend pointed out, is reputed to have invaded our valley on an amorous quest. She had, he said, the habit of making, for her pleasure, a "paradise" in every city where she stayed. My father easily identified this Semiramis with the Shamiram of our folk-tales and especially the legend in which Arai figures as the victim of her thwarted desire. This Arai was the most beautiful of our princes, and a Galahad besides. He refused the advances of the heathen queen. She thought to take him by force.

It was proposed to our guest that he should listen to a minstrel's version of the tale; for it happened that we had sent for a ballad-singer—now somewhat of a rarity in our land—to provide entertainment; and by this time he should have been ready, with his *al'ud*. That's an instrument strung with silk and played with a piece of shell: an old form of the lute. The singer twangs it to accompany his voice, while, in some minor key, he recites the fortunes of queen or prince.

So the blind man was called in, and given his theme. Presently, after a few tentative

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notes, on the strings, he began swaying his body and swinging his spirit into the song, which seemed an improvisation, rather than a set form. In that, I suppose, was its chief charm; for it can't well be reported, and whatever one writes down seems ruined in the act of being *fixed*. Without, then, the pretense of accurately reporting the man's words, I can arrange only such elements as I recall, in measures at least a little like his untaught accords.

The Ballad of Arai and Shamiram.

BY THE BLIND SINGER OF NAKHITCHIVAN.

Shamiram, Shamiram, whence are you, Goddess and Queen?

"Of the Fish-goddess I came, in the care of
the shepherd-boy.
I was fed by the doves."

Who gave you your fierce desires? Who fed
you with Power?

"Before me kings bowed. By my courage
they were lured;
By my love strong kings were inflamed."

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These fell, but you stood.

“Many a palace had I, daughter of Astar-gat.

A paradise, too, with fountains and flowers,
In Babylon, Gate of the God.”

Were not these enough to cool the flame of
desire?

“Quenchless was that flame. Irresistible my
charm.”

Why did you listen to the throng? Why did
you desire the breath of Arai, of pleas-
ant name, prince of the north?

“I had heard the praise of his beauty; why
should I be denied!

I, Queen above Queens.”

Worshipper of many gods, what could you
offer him, the servant of one? Surely he
scorned your hand, with the doves of
Ishtar.

Would you have him worship Anu, or Bel?

“With me, dancing, and the feasts of night,
perfumed.

For him, fasting, and the bending of knees

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to his god, the impotent Asdvadz!
Surely exchange were his gain!"

So you thought, deeming, the while, that you
could bend his will by your force.

Clouds gather on the sides of Arghidagh,
mountain of Nuh.

Now rears a pillar of blackness, with sound
of rain on our fertile valleys; on our
rice fields is the howling of wind and
the breaking of hail:

These are neither clouds nor rain, but an
army of men;

With the blackness of locust swarms they
fall on our bands;

Their roar is the wind: their arrows the fall-
ing hail.

"I have conquered your feeble bands, now
bring me the Prince!

It is Shamiram that speaks!"

Did you think to take him alive, foolish
Queen?

Go look in the front of the ranks; he is cold
and still.

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Mourn then, and lift your voice, till it
cleaves the sky.

It reaches not where he is; his soul is flown.
You but carry a husk to your home.

“I will say he is alive. I will build him a
house, and hold him secure, captured
and sealed.”

Go, delude your soul. This is not he.
Pleasure has brushed your mouth, ashes are
there.

Ashes have clung to your lips, and will be on
your tongue; but the soul of Arai, the
pure, that has escaped.

His beauty was not for you, Shamiram!

I could see that our guest was engrossed
in this performance, to which he attended
thoughtfully and with great respect. For my-
self, it had taken a great hold upon me, and
the visions it brought touched my imagina-
tion, so that I was not sorry to leave the
crowd and retire, as I was told to do, it be-
ing beyond my usual time. In the outer
porches, where my bed was already being
spread, there was room and quiet to indulge
my fancies, which were as innocent as those

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fleecy clouds that lay across the face of the moon. Looking into a great sky-space, where were two stars, I saw the semblance of eyes, in a forehead to which drifting clouds had added the appearance of hoary brows, under whitened locks. I was not deluded. This was not the face of the God *Asdvadz*, who, for our conversion, became man. Never for one moment did I think of him as a giant, inhabiting the sky. To that exalted kingdom I supposed the soul of Arai might have gone, but in what guise? To what end? My head was not littered with notions of golden thrones, or gates, or streets. No beings with feathery wings peopled that reality for me. My mind was unspoiled. This I owe to the simplicity and the honesty of my father's way, which was to teach godliness rather than a tinsel god. His religion was like a wholesome bread.

As for the place where Arai went, I determined to know more of such things. And, first, I wished to know more of my world.

I woke on the following morning to a freshness of early summer, and saw the sunlight upon the tiling of the neighboring sheds, and on the pear tree by the corner of

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our wall. I inhaled the speaking air and felt that there is reality in our world. I took my towel and went to the courtyard fountain to wash.

Our famous guest had gone, and I was not to see him again; but I felt that part of me had gone with him to his western world. I must follow, sometime, and retrieve it: a vague impulse, rather than a thought.

TALES AND TRADITIONS

I HAVE said that our traditions, and the clear air of our uplands, are not favorable to romance, which seems of Mediterranean birth. Nevertheless, I must own, we have our youthful ardors, which must, at times, be checked. (At least we do not fan them wantonly into flame, as do your procurers, the decadent books.)

With us the family is a microcosm. Under one roof live father, mother, the married sons, the children of these, in greater harmony than would be believed. It is the patriarchal form. (God forgive me! I speak as if these things were still so, seeing that they are a reality to me.)

Under these conditions—in a solidarity of community and race—indulgence of the unlawful passions was unknown. Doubtless in mixed communities, in degenerate towns, immorality may have been known. I never encountered it. Pariahs among the Hayq? They would end as gypsies, and as outcasts from our social bond. This is not my verdict, but that of the world, which cannot attach the

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stigma of unchastity to our name: never while we lived in the national life of our race, under the sanction of our venerable patriarch of Echmiadzin.

There is, or was, rather, a concern for the finding of proper mates, not only congenial and suited to the marriage state, but such as could be approved by our head. Wedlock between those of related families was forbidden, if so much as the great-grandparents had been the same. That being the case, it might often happen that a youth must set aside his desire.

It happened, in a case like this, that an older brother of mine resisted the plans made by my parents for his happiness, and an alliance that seemed suitable in their eyes, because he had found pleasure in the sight of a girl of his own age, whose grandparents were ours. This being the relationship, greater freedom had been allowed than is customary, in our conditions, between men and maidens of marriageable age. Seeing how the matter stood, and that the case was hopeless, my father had forbidden him to speak to the girl, but had not thought necessary to prevent her visiting our home. So it

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happened that one night she and her parents were in our great hall when a storyteller of the professional sort, was narrating, for our entertainment, the tale of Serpent Mountain, a place famous in the folk-lore of the Araxes plain. My brother kept his eyes on our cousin's face, while he listened to the story, which was something like this:

The Serpent Woman of Otzezar.

On the Aras, beyond Nakhitchivan, is the mountain of Otzezar. On this declivity, which is strewn with every sort of boulders and rocks, the serpents gather at certain times of the year. They collect in such numbers that there is no place for a man to lie down. Indeed it requires daring to approach its base. Birds and beasts alike flee at this time and leave the rocks to the reptiles, which are of every kind, the most poisonous as well as the least. Not all of these are true serpents. Some among them are other forms, which have entered the transformation period which they are allowed. For at such a time, which comes once in their lives, a serpent may assume the form of a man, or a woman,

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or any other shape it pleases. This dispensation is given in pity for the snakes, whose shape is loathed by all created things. Not all take advantage, but some do. Their shape, not their nature, is changed.

At such a time of the year a herdsman remained behind his companions, in the neighborhood of the mountain, to search for a sheath-knife which he had lost among the rocks. As he looked here and there in the debris, night had begun to fall, and he despaired of finding what he sought; but just then a young woman shyly approached. She stopped three paces distant, and said, averting her face: "I have found this. Perhaps it is yours."

Seeing in her extended hand the knife he sought, he advanced and took it. At the same moment he saw her face, which was fairer and more to be desired than any he had yet seen. Wondering much, and stammering in his speech, he inquired who she was and what she did in this desolate place.

"Are you not afraid," he asked, "that the *Yukha* will find you and put you under a spell?" (The *Yukha* is a transformed serpent.)

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"That," she responded, "is exactly what I fear." And suddenly she began to cry.

The herdsman drew nearer to her, either from sympathy or from the effect of her charms, and tried to get her to speak. This she refused to do, for a time. Finally, as he was distraught in his mind, not knowing whether to leave her there or to take her away, she said to him, "Protect me this night; for I cannot tell if I have friends."

Still wondering at this, he put her upon his horse and took her to a distant hut, where he made her a bed as well as he knew how, himself sleeping outside the door, upon the ground.

In the morning he besought her, "Tell me who you are, and why you consent to be the guest of so rude a man."

"Bring me materials and utensils for preparing food," she answered, "and I will show you who I am."

He brought her all the things she asked for, and she transformed them into marvels of the cooking art, such as he had never seen. Also she found means to adorn the inside of the hut, so that it seemed like nothing of the

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interior to which he was used, but more fit to be the chamber of such as she.

But after he had eaten his fill and wondered at the transformation of the hut, in which were shining textures that he had not seen and ornaments she could with difficulty have concealed about her, since she had come there empty-handed and alone, he spoke his question again:

"But what does this show? I know even less than before."

"Stupid man," she answered, "it shows that I am your wife; and all that you eat and see is my gift."

After that he had to be content, for he saw that he should lose all if he pressed the question.

But one day there came that way a traveller from Teheran, and asked leave to stop for the night. By that time the hut had been transformed into a habitable house and hall, with apartments for guests, and with wine-house and bakehouse at the rear; and the herdsman had attained wealth, by what fortune he hardly knew. Therefore the traveller was made at home and soon sat with his host at a splendid feast.

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During the feast the traveller, who wore an onyx ring, was seen to rub it with a cloth, once and again. Also he looked strangely at the wife of his host. That night when they sat outside alone, in view of the stars, he confided the matter of the ring.

"This wife of yours," he said in low tones, "is no woman at all but a Yukha, who has deceived you with her charms."

The host was abashed. "How can I believe such a tale?" he stammered, disturbed in spite of himself; for the traveller's learning seemed very great.

"Do as I say," the traveller said, "and you may prove this thing for yourself. The onyx has revealed it to me; for it loses its color in the presence of a thing transformed. But ask her on the following night to prepare a meal in which there must be salt in all the food, as salt meat, salt olives, and other things, feigning that I have prescribed it for the needs of your blood. The same night do you remove all drinking water from the house and shut up the doors to prevent her going away. Remain awake and see what she will do."

The traveller went on his way. The man

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did as he had been told, with the result that he saw his wife rise in the night and change her form, so that she could glide out of the high window-light at will. The foolish fellow was so enraged at this sight that with difficulty could he contain himself until the morning came, when he put in her food a poison, as had been arranged, of which one drop on the tongue will instantly kill.

The woman died, but now the man was overcome with grief and remorse. He could no longer endure the sight of the house, but wandered away. The traveller, who had secretly kept watch, returned and took all that he desired.

My brother, who had finally had his interest stirred, asked, "At what time of the year do the serpents gather on Otzezar?" My uncle, casting a judicious eye upward, hesitated and said: "The narrative does not say. But I should think it must be now, during the hot month of the year. Because at this season the serpents are active and the rocks are warm. Let us suppose it to be now."

My brother nodded, and with a restless air, he looked about the hall and went out.

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Always more ardent than I, it was plain that he was stirred by the presence of this girl in the house. Soon after the close of the tale the younger women had gone—and she with them—to fetch figs, nuts and raisins for the pleasure of our circle and guests. She was not with them when they returned.

It was an innocent thing for those two to stand and talk outside, or even go together to a garden seat at night; but my brother knew that he was yielding to a desire that could not bear fruit in any good way but must only breed a tempest in his heart. Even had he let his desire gain control, the rest would not have allowed it, nor would he have wished them to; for the moment he was heady and inclined to rebel.

My father was severe with him after all had gone. "You knew," he said, "that it was an unseemly thing for you to do, just because your admiration for her is too great, considering the relation in which you stand. There could be no dispensation from the Patriarch for such a marriage and you should turn your mind another way."

The boy was silent, but he was also sullen, and unreconciled. In the morning he was not

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to be found in the house or anywhere around, having left before any of us waked. He had taken the horse which it was his privilege to ride. My father said: "He has gone away to cool off. It is as well so, although he might have left word. We shall see him back by dark."

But at night he had not returned. Lights were kept and my mother refused to sleep. In the morning she insisted upon a search. My father agreed, and I rode with him to Erivan. There we learned from an inn-keeper that he had stopped for food, and ridden in the direction of Nakhitchivan. By frequent inquiries along the road we found that he had indeed gone that way.

The valley of the Aras for many versts below that town was a succession of orchards and vineyards, pleasant to see, but later in the day we left all cultivation and followed a soft track over the grassy steppe. We passed through a gap in the hills and came out upon a valley through which flows a tributary to the Aras, which we crossed—an experience for me, owing to the depth and swiftness of the stream. Toward night we saw what seemed puffs of smoke detach themselves

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from the side of Ararat and move toward us; then a pillar seemed to rise into the air and drive toward us. Soon we were in drenching rain and a storm of wind. We were glad to take shelter in a posthouse by the road. There we remained for the night, sleeping on a wooden framework which had to serve for bed. Food we had brought with us, otherwise we should have fared hard, for all that the place provided was tea. But we learned that my brother had stopped there the day before, asking for refreshment before going to the next post.

The next morning we followed a track up and down over bare hills nearing Nakhitchivan. Suddenly at a rise of the ground we encountered my brother. He was riding in escort of a Cossack from the police office of that town, who had demanded of him a passport, a matter of which he had taken no thought, forgetting that he was on the Persian frontier. On his assuring the police that they would be well repaid they had given him this escort instead of keeping him in bonds. He seemed shame-faced—but my father said nothing in rebuke. It was necessary to re-

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trace the road with him to obtain his release. This was done and the fee paid.

I asked him secretly, "Why did you go away?" He said, "I wished to know the truth about Otzezar." But that mountain he never reached.

Before we set out for home my father said to us both, "Come with me and see the edge of the world."

He took us to an eminence above the town and there we could indeed believe that we saw the place where all things end: the frontier of the habitable world.

A bare and treeless plain slopes down to the Aras, which has emerged by some hidden cleft in the range. The plain is the brown and gray of the earth upon which a scant vegetation, once green, is dying or dead. Behind us are low hills of reddish earth, and before us a bold projecting mass, the Persian range. Eastward a range, snow-clad, that towered ten thousand feet above our heads; a splendor to look upon if we lifted our eyes, but the lower slopes desolate and dry as the Sea of the Dead.

We were silent for a time. Then my father said, pointing to the snow-topped wall:

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"Beyond that is Virkana (Hyrkania). It is the 'Wolf's Land' of the Persians of old. And well named."

So we turned and rode away. It had left more than a picture on my mind. My companions were busy with their own thoughts and we rode homeward without disturbing the spell. Gradually it faded or seemed to fade from my mind, but I may recall it at any time. This spell is not superstition. It is mystery. It is a valid requirement of our minds. Poets know this, and call up images that evoke the sense of mystery.

In the Latin I found images of this kind, and many years later when I learned to read Horace I found myself recalling the impression of that day; recalling the very spell:

"Sive per Syrtis, iter aestuosus,
Sive facturus per inhospitalem
Caucasum vel quae loca fabulosus
Lambit Hydaspes."

And other passages like that. That is why I love Horace.

We reached home without other notable event. My father wisely directed my brother's

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mind toward commercial subjects in preparation for a new enterprise he wished him to undertake.

If, as it seemed to me after that day at Nakhitchivan, my parental home was near to the confines of civilization and at no great distance from the end of the habitable world, so also it was near to the beginning. That was not clear to me at the first, because boyhood accepts all things that it finds and supposes that they have always been so. But gradually I learned that there are origins of people and of towns, the race itself; and that this village home of mine was near to the origins of mankind.

Myths have a certain reality for a boy. He does not sharply mark them off from what are called historic facts. I think there is an advantage in this. The so-called facts are often very opaque things, food for pedants, but myths are luminous in themselves.

About the great Iskander (Alexander) there were forming myths, but he is too new, too matter-of-fact to serve. Long before he had his design of conquering the world Nimrod, a valid myth so far as I was concerned, had built it. Nimrod, as the legend ran, had

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“built the world”; quite an extraordinary thing for him to do. Reflect that he was a hunter, as the records say “a mighty hunter before Jahveh”; and he, as the patriarchal legends on which I was nourished gave me to understand, had built cities: that is to say, the world. He built Babylon. There were also Erech and Accad and Nineveh to his credit, but neglect them: whoever built Babylon built the world, which has ever since been repeating itself. All modern cities are Babylon—so I came to imagine; not without truth. Babylon happens to be an archetype; Nimrod, who conceived it, was a hunter. So too the modern city is built for hunters—fame hunters, flesh hunters, amusement hunters and those who hunt for they know not what, “happiness,” excitement or the like. But I began to say that this place of my early memory was near to the origins of the world. Having said that perhaps it would be wiser to cease and say nothing of the deluge myth which the sight of Ararat, so near to our view, frequently recalled to our mind, all my youth.

I need not say that we who are of eastern birth have a reverence for things that are old.

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Even old age in man we regard with a respect which your compatriots cannot wholly understand. Indeed, I can see a reason for this fact (to us so incredible and strange), that your Clever Ones continually mock at age and its follies, consigning all prerogatives to the young: the reason is that your old age is not the ripening of wisdom but the decay of those who never were wise. It is not the maturing of a spirit but the decay of a mechanism; and such a decay is rust.

I know that our myth of the ark has long been a matter of much mirth, and must long be among those who desire above all things to be amused. Nor would I hope to rescue that ancient soul, who perhaps is no man at all but simply Noe, from the ignominy of being such a stock, out of which much laughter may be made. But whether the name is Manu, or Gilgamesh, or Xisuthrus (the Very Wise), there is for me a different pleasure in recalling that cosmic tale, of which the essence is that Chaos was once renewed, because of the vices of men. Here is a warning to the Very Wise, whether he be of 2000 B.C. or as many years later than *Kristós*. And there must always be an affection for me in

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the thought that on that holy mountain, Ararat, the preserving vessel once rested, by whose agency the life of men was renewed. So also there is a dignity in that picture of what went before, when "the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened, and the rain was upon the earth . . . and the waters prevailed exceedingly upon the earth; and the ark went on the face of the waters."

It is, if you like, the dignity of speech; but where there is dignity there is some truth. Only the westernized mind would seek here merely details at which to laugh. I say this to you who have come in contact with our mind and have a tincture of the feeling of which I speak.

But enough of origins. We might continue with these traditions all the night and thus lose the picture I designed to give, of a life that developed among things like these. I must prepare you, for the scene will change.

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MY ancestors were originally from the north; they were of an Aryan stock, like that which had already lent its quota to that people whom we call "Haik" (or more properly Hayq, from their hero and founder, in the early mists). So firmly did my great-grandsire and his descendants weld their interests with that of the people among whom they came, that they regarded them and their church as their own. Stronger loyalty does not exist. We are as one of the Hayq.

When in the course of his early life a certain eagerness, and a desire to adventure and *know*, overcame my father's interest in the affairs of home, he travelled through parts of Europe and was absent for a year. But he returned. I have already told how he promised our venerable patriarch at Echmiadzin so to do.

European civilization which, from the talk of travellers who had stopped at his home, seemed to him a necessary thing, when examined closely he found to be infected with

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a decay of which the patriarchal life, as he knew it, was free. This, and his love for his family and all the life of that simple place, brought him again to his home. For that return he had honor from me.

But though he returned and was not discontent with his lot, he saw that there were certain things in the mind-life of the western peoples which it might be to our advantage to obtain. He knew that it was unlikely that the seeds of this culture could be brought readily to so distant a place as the heart of the ancient Hyasdan, and he studied, privately, to devise some way by which we, his children, might be brought in contact with the West.

At times I saw his eyes resting upon me, and in the course of time I knew that he saw in me some ability to absorb those things of which he had seen a little himself, and gradually he brought his plans around to this point:

"I must make a journey," he announced, "to the capital of the neighboring empire; to Stamboul. I have business there to which I must attend. Stamboul is the gateway to the lands of the Franks. My eldest son I will

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leave in charge of the stores, with his uncle as adviser. I have learned that under responsibility he can be wise. I will take with me Sirov, who is too young to serve in matters of the shops, but who will learn at least that there is a world behind the western mountains, just as there is" (he said it smiling) "an end of the world just over the mountains at our east, by Nakhitchivan." All things were adjusted to his plan.

You may guess what throbbings in my breast; what preparations, what embracings, what tears. These were all got through with in some way, and we found ourselves in the peasant wagons, travelling toward the pass, over a route that I have already described.

Desolation and desert and the lonely gorge, I knew these, and they caused me little surprise. But when we came into the valley of the Rion and under the influence of the sea, I found a strangeness of delight in the laurels and the box, and was enraptured by the scent of the wild azaleas which I gathered in my hands, wondering how such flowers could be, or how they could bloom in a wasteness without care of human hands. For you must recall that in all my life to the

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time I had never seen rich verdure and flowering shrubs or trees except those which were watered at great pains, with streams brought from a distance, at marvellous expense.

Not alone the greenery but the new scenes now charmed me. Even a posthouse or inn, if it had a fresh coat of whitewash and windows that were glazed, caused a stirring of some inner sense which creates a beauty where perhaps there is none. Travel liberates; but it is the first great journey, taken in early youth, which truly emancipates the soul. Gladdened by all that it sees the soul adds lustre to every common sight, and the wonder of existence is renewed.

With this in mind, picture that first sight of the sea; or perhaps recall your own. Rounding some turn or topping some rise of ground, of a sudden it is there: blue, and spreading out to the unknown. A steamer lies there, anchored well out from the shore: commerce, voyagings, the wide world. It is the essence of romance.

We skirted the coasts of the Black Sea, stopping at Trebizond, Ordou, Samsun; some lesser places. I pass these by. In a few days

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we listened to the shouts of the boatmen in the Bosphoros Strait, clamoring for our custom, to carry us to shore. An experience, that alone: the shouting boatmen of Stamboul, and the smother of *caïque* along the shore; the *caïque-jees*, active, aggressive souls from whom the quiet of the East has been sloughed away.

If you should try to arrange these impressions of Stamboul and the city of the Straits, you might find the makings of some imagistic verse; but I would not seek to order or arrange. Places are mingled and confused. There is no sequence, not even of time.

Strange vehicles run along tracks of iron, dragged by horses—long, high-boned beasts; it is the day of horse cars, it seems. But up the long hills of Scutari climb only the closed cabs. In a tunnel there is darkness and a deafening roar; snug carriages are being pulled by a huge belt, through a darkness and out toward a distant light. In contrast is the noiseless gliding of the *caïque* by whose motion we are carried across the Golden Horn—an incomparable smoothness of progression, like an ordered energy of some dream.

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Now the heavy scents of the Egyptian bazaar, blend of every aroma known to man except those that might injure or offend; the drugged silence of some strange air, and a shadowing roof that gathers under it the apothecary shops of the eastern world, endlessly, a full street.

Now the splashing of paddle wheels as the Bosphoros steamer plies between farther shores; Moslem women of the middle sort are herded at one end of the boat, screened from view. But now, in passing along some quay or esplanade of the shore one sees high-born Moslem beauty, houri-like in some shimmering drape that but intensifies the lure and makes of the woman a moving mystery in silk.

On such an esplanade by the open Strait—it may be Hissar—a man flings his line to the sea and instantly hauls it to the shore; one sees him draw out the fish, banded with silver and blue, just iridescent with green. A simple way to take food; an appealing food to take.

There is a strangeness in the hillside streets, high above the waters of the strait. All life and its interchanges are hidden be-

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hind great doors, upon which great knockers hang, brass or bronze, and behind windows that jut, but are lattice-closed. Only the eyes from within may see; all life is veiled; all but vender's who goes by, and his cry of "En-ghi-nar" is heard over the walls of the street and behind the latticed windows where there is need of food. Artichokes, the blue-flowered food for the delicately reared, the veiled women in the gardens that are not seen.

We have entered an old *konak*. The veiled life of it is vanished and gone. Strangers possess it and we may see its vines and trees, wistaria, heavy with drooping flowers, and pomegranate, and the giant box. We may follow pebbled paths to a goldfish pool. We may find strange fruit—how can this be? Did not our mountain grow every kind?

Strange savors have crept into the food. The pilau is no simple dish for the children and home. Spices bite the tongue and in the rice are small black fruits, and the pine-nut—too exotic for our taste.

At Beyuk Deré there is a vale where the shadow is heavy from the hill. There flame the red peony flowers, a sword upon the senses. But in the pleasure-place near by are

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pebbles to walk upon, very white, and tables for coolness and pleasant drinks.

Of sights that one sees, one is supreme: the Sophia Mosque. Subdued entrance, and the removal of shoes. (To the turbaned men this is holy as well as to us.) Porphyry columns, huge; we pass into silence and deeper gloom—then a vastness unfolds. Aspiration has lifted, walls and dome. Here the spirit still worships; the spirit and soul of antiquity pulsate under that vault of stone, and under the flaunted Koran texts are asleep figures; there is the faint fanning, somewhere, of angels' wings.

We are out again in the blinding light. This too is strange. The day is gone in a daze. From some slenderest pencil of minaret there floats a call—not that simple, pensive cry of the little towns of the East but a studied thing, an arabesque of sound in which something of the plaintiveness is yet retained:

*“Allah Ekber, Allah Ekber,
La il la he ill Allah.” . . .*

The voice is cast afar, retracted, and dies

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away. Strange how one remembers these things.

All the business that was done in these days, all the weighty affairs, are forgotten. These things remain. They remain, and as I think of them I suddenly find that the stay is over, and the magic of Stamboul is past. I feel the throbbing of a great screw in the belly of the ship and the pounding of engines that drive. I am lying rolled in a *yorgha*n on the deck, and we have left the mouth of the Straits. About us is the swell of that ancient sea over which Jason sailed. The waters are black. To the south the shoreline fades away and only distant mountain can be seen. We are in the arms of the night. We have brushed the fringes of the unknown and have dipped curious hands in the wideness of the world.

During that short voyage, as we sat on our rug on the deck, my father disclosed to me his new plan. He had heard, it seemed, of a new school in the interior *vilayet*, no great distance from Samsun, where the foreign tongues could be learned and some useful branches, without neglect of our classic speech, the *Kyrapar* (or Written Word). He

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had made inquiries and learned that this was no proselyting scheme of the Franks, but seemingly an effort to put the western culture within our reach ; for which privilege we had to pay : a good sign. As this culture was what he designed for me to acquire, we should visit this place now. It would do no harm. I might even remain for a time. (This to prepare my mind.) By these few words I was fired and partly awakened out of my dream. I felt myself becoming an entity in the world. New tentacles reached toward me from even beyond great seas. Big new notions touched at the port of my soul.

From our packs my father directed our servant to take the provision we had brought for our own use and there upon the deck, (not below, in saloon or cabin and in the breath of those ships an odor of varnish oils which we mountaineers detest,) we ate not the toy loaves of the bakeshops, and the sweet grapes of the markets, but a strong *abucht* of Kanakir that we brought with us all the way. It fortified me against the motion of the sea and I was happy, looking for a sight of the land. Or standing by the prow I watched the dolphins which come up from the Mediter-

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anean in such large schools, and, being sportive things, never fail to race the boats, seeming to delight in proving their supremacy against a competitor so huge.

That day we passed the cape of Kerembeh and afterwards the promontory of Sinope. We dropped anchor in the harbor of Samsun, it seemed to me a great way from the shore. The *sandalls*, most unwieldy of boats, lightened the luggage-hold and took us (as a form of baggage we were piled) to the plain sand of the Turkish shore, upon which we leaped. *Hamals* carried our burdens to the inn.

After Stamboul, Samsun was of no account to me. My mind ran ahead, to the place we were to see. A destiny, it might be, for me.

Now there is no need to dwell on that journey up from the sea. It is a going down, and a climbing up, ridge after ridge of the mountain range, till the memory of them becomes a blur. But in the remembrance of travel there is nothing less apt to fade than the moment when one arrives at the Khan—whatever one it be, *Chakal* or *Jumbush*, it makes no odds—and one's own bodyservant

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has himself prepared the evening meal and laid it on the platform of one's room.

After all have lain down to try to sleep one hears the sound of water falling, in the outer dark, and remembers that one is in the mountains far from men. Afterwards the jackals bark.

The next day we emerged on the Phazimon plain, which is basined by a circuit of blue hills. Whole armies might manœuvre here and be to each other but a faint smoke seen afar. Distance would swallow up noise.

On that plain, near the upper end, is a line of the faintest green. Behind that the city lies hid. The bare, unwatered plain on this side, then the vineyards, a bewildering maze; last of all the town.

Life is there for us in some new guise: you know the feeling. New contacts; some bit of glory hidden for us behind those dull walls of clay, unbaked.

There is no dignity in the houses of Phazimon; each by itself is uncouth and brown,—yet something is there, and it tells. It seems that I would never tire looking across this plain thing,—this vale of dull red roofs and

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walls of plaster or of mud,—to the Church Lusavorchagan, which crowns the opposite hill. I am seeing it now from the hill of the schools.

My father saw and was satisfied. He detected a sincerity in the personnel of the faculty, besides the spirit of learning which was there. He knew—being a reader of men—that my faith would be safe from molestation at their hands. Arrangements were easily made. He then sent a letter by post to precede him, acquainting my mother with the new plan, so that there might be no panic on his return when she found me to be not present with him.

Before leaving he made friends of an influential family of the town, members of our nation and our Church. In this way I had always friends and something of the amenities of home. I was with them on holidays and the national feasts.

PHAZIMON

I WILL speak of that Church of my friends.

With the Hayq, as you know, the Church is our national home. We love to go there. We love those festal days.

The Agha, my father's friend, was high in the Council of the Church, his son a *diratsú* or chorister of the Lusavorchagan, gifted in the singing of those noble hymns. Even in the home, in his father's hall, he would sing for us and the entertainment of the guests; often as not some *sharagan*, which, like no other chant, stirs noble longing in the soul of the Hayq. The emotions of these chants and songs have bound us by the deepest bond and never can be forgot.

There was great stir in the house of my friends in preparation for some great day. *Bah*, or the half-day fast, was cheerfully endured. The house itself was cleaned as if for a feast. Gladness of anticipation was upon all.

Even a boy might partake in the ceremonial or song for the uplift of the vast

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company that gathered in the auditorium of the Church. The surpliced boys I remember best. There were three who stood forward from the choir to take the parts of those Hebrew three who had been carried captive to the land of Shinar by an ancient king. These were three whom Ashpenaz, the master of the eunuchs, had selected to stand in the palace of that king, for they were well favored, without blemish and skilled in the knowledge of that time. These are the three that refused to fall down and worship the image which the king had made, and to represent them, as I have said, were the young boys who were to sing the chant. But first a reader, a mature man, recited in a dignified voice and a dramatic manner the story of the image and the plot against those boys. They then chanted their reply to the king, in the language of the *Kyrapar*, than which there is no more impressive vehicle of speech. The sounds may be meaningless to foreign ears, but the lines are contours of rugged hills and the syntax carries the meaning to a climactic end. There is a concord and a government in that tongue, which for dignity is unsurpassed. We do well to treas-

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ure it, we of the Hayq, our great heritage,
when the graces of concord are being cast to
the winds.

The music of that chant is an indescribable
thing. It is no mere melodious tune that
might appeal to the softer sentiments of the
mind. No. The character and the traditions
of the race find there the outlet and expres-
sion of their form, of which the virtue sinks
in so that the hearer, be he only a child,
knows in his heart that he will never yield,
but will die a martyr rather than abandon
his faith. And this thing, the world knows,
we will do.

Votch eench é bido	(We are not careful
Vas'n panit aetorik	in this matter
Dal kez badaskani:	to give answer to
	thee:)

Haba te votch,	(But if not,
Haydni litzir kez arka,	be it known to thee,
	king,
Uz tiss ko votch bash-	thy idols we worship
tenk;	not;)

Yev hadkerit zosko	(Nor yet before that
	image of gold
Zor ganknetsir,	which thou'st set up,
Yerghir votch bak anenk.	ground shall we kiss.)

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There you have, in one word, the music and the martyrdom of a race.

No more impressive thing than that comes to my mind unless it be on Easter Day when a like throng is gathered in the Church, and a Priest chants the story of the burial of Kristós, and how the women came the third day, bringing spices which they had prepared, but found the stone rolled away; and behold two men stood near saying to them:

Tché ast, kanzi haryav. (He is not here, because
He rose.)

Then the standing multitude reply in one great voice:

Orhneyal é haroutun (Blessed is the resurrec-
Kristosi. tion of the Christ.)

In this all participate and there is the common thrill through all, with the vibration of that great voice, with which comes the assurance that we are all one—one body politic, body religious, one organism of race and faith.

The unknowing wonder at this and well they may. It's a thing one cannot explain. An experience, and near to the core of a life.

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After such exaltation there is dispersal, home, a cooling of the spirits in the court or in the hall. But the women have much to do in their quarters, removed from the men. We know that their occupation will produce things worth while, and that in due time there will be the glory of food.

Again, later, there will be wine and fruit with the sociability of the big hall, for the evenings are long. We shall sing one or two national songs, and our *diratsú* will sing one of his *sharagans*, for of that we don't ever tire; and besides, it heartens the soul.

Zar-teek parc im, . . . (Awake, my glory, . . .)

That alone is a theme and a *motif* that carries long. It has that cadence, that accent of longing which, through a strange rhythm and those shadings of the voice below the half tone, motivate the deeper yearnings of the heart.

That's a heritage, you know. That sort of thing isn't invented in a day.

After my telling you this, although it will be a digression here, I ought to say that this Agha and his sons, daughters, grandchildren, did not remain in the national Church.

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That is both a mystery and a grief. A mystery, because they were heart and soul of its life, as I have tried to say; altogether identified with its rhythm and beat, so far as worship was concerned, or any essential thing. And the old man himself—not so old either at the crisis of which I speak—would seem to have been a fortress against all innovations or any religious wave that would threaten the solidarity of the Church. He was, first of all, a man of sense. He was politic and discreet, not easily stirred by new enthusiasms, doctrines, winds of belief. This swirl of the evangelical motivation which brought its emissaries from overseas and literally to the ends of the earth would have passed him by untouched,—a mere spectator,—but for that odd weed, intolerance, which now reared its bulk in the garden of his ancestral faith. One of his daughters, it appears, had been desired in marriage by a worthy man of the new persuasion. Instead of refusing, in a rage, to consider the matter, this man investigated both the man and his beliefs. Finding nothing in the latter but a renewal of the primitive things of the faith, “about which,” he said boldly, “we have cast

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a gracious garment of forms which we all love and would be sorry to cast aside—but we needn't damn those who think they can do without them," he gave his consent to the match. Upon hearing this the bulk of his old associates turned against him. "You have become Protestant," they said; and heaped upon him such odium that he was forced at last to say, "If to be fair and open-minded is to be Protestant that is the thing I am"; and he bore the insult, enduring reproach even from his sons. Eventually they followed his example. The honors were, in the end, for the newer worship. They of the Mother Church grew ashamed of their epithet "poród" (leper) which had been invented as a jibe and a parody of the hated name.

My father had returned to our home. I addressed myself to the work of the school. After the strangeness had worn a little, I took it seriously. I wondered that there could be so much to know. It opened new doors to my mind, and for the most part I was glad to go in. At other times the prospect was arid enough. The best I could think of it was that this so great business of the western schools (which this one approached as nearly as it

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could) gives occupation to our restless souls. Yet it is a routine.

You would rather wish me to remember, no doubt, how I woke each morning at the ringing of a bell and went out with a towel on my arm to wash at the *havouss*, where a slender stream fell always to the pool; and how pleasant it was, and how cool—this outdoor toilet in the land of little rain—or to plunge there, in the early hours before any duties could begin. The flagstones that bordered the pool and lined it, the willow tree at the south, the outlet for overflow, that dribbled to the gardens below, and a pied wagtail that waded in that scanty supply—you will expect me to remember these little things. You see, we are again out of doors. And why not? Is it not here that life grows, is informed? Those hours on the hard forms, nose in book, what have they to do with the Lost Land? They were the road-making of the mind, punishment for possessing a brain, penalties, anything you please; taxes imposed upon life. We made so many paths, and at such pains. Well, most of them are effaced. What will you have? Here is a question; if I had not traced those many paths

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and faced those interrogation points at the end of each, should I have gone back to the patriarchal life and that mountain home? These processes of long study, of research, detach many of those anchorages by which the soul knows itself to be secure. It finds itself adventuring in the dark. But I go too fast.

For a time I took much zest in the life of the school. After hours I took part in their sports, or I walked in the fields, which, by some foresight, were right at our gate.

When we had first come to Phazimon it was the harvest time of wheat, and men worked with sickles reaping that grain. Now it was stubble everywhere and we walked freely, leaving the paths at will.

The stubble was short and clean, making no obstacle to our feet. The sheaves they had piled in stacks, by a special skill, very large, and these round tumuli dotted the plain. Except on the vineyard side they were everywhere, far as eye could see. So much grain, and so beautiful, in the shimmer of afternoon! It is my picture of the Phazimon Plain. It is my panorama of harvest, my portion of wealth that cannot be taxed.

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And now, before the time of autumn rains, preparations were being made to thresh that store. Where but lately the wheat had rippled green and then ripened into gold, became a hardened floor, surrounded by booths, for shade. Soon the oxen circled in that moon of broken sheaves, dragging over them the flinted boards. On those boards might be a woman or boy, guiding the little beasts over it and around and around, until the tough stalks became *saman*, and the threshed wheat lay safely beneath. This is an intimate thing between the growing and the eating of food. Those who sowed that grain, cut and threshed, and are now to toss it in the air to be winnowed by the wind, they know the meaning of bread; they and their children, down to the youngest one, who takes his turn driving a yoke of oxen round the floor. Even to us who watched them it became a living thing, this mystery of germination, husbandry and food. But to those who can but buy the flour, or (sadder yet) only the finished loaf, those meanings are far away. Thus their life easily becomes a caricature of the real. They are eating shadows, and not food; eating shadows and pursuing mists—

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unless by some creative ferment they are saved.

As the *saman* began to gather its mountain on the south of the floor, carried there by the gale from the north, the roads would fill with the wicker-topped carts drawn by the water-buffalo, distributing that minced straw to the lofts and barns. Of the grain-sack, part were for the mills, part for the households of the town. Every home knows the making of *bulghour*, how it must be boiled and dried, and how it must be braised. All the mortars are full and men waiting their turn; for this bulghour is the foundation of health for the home, and every house must have its quern for the breaking of so precious a grain.

All these things are an imprint on the mind—a better imprint, it seems, for me, than the theorems of my algebra books; and more suited than they—shouldn't you say that too?—to solve for me the equations of life. However that may be, they are crowding into the tale. I find them at home.

Ah, but with my absorption in the sights of the plain as they lay open to me just outside the gates of the school, I am forgetting

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the vintage, and the business of the vines. True, I did not see that every day, but was asked often to the vineyard of my friends.

Who can forget the sweet white grapes of Phazimon, which crowd the cluster in their eagerness to fill, and are browned because of the sun? These are a true wine-yielding grape, yet they are a desired grape to eat fresh from the vine; sweet, but they never cloy. Now if the vineyard is an appurtenance of every home—and it was so in this place—then we have another bond between man and the soil, even though he resides in the town. This bond you Westerns thoughtlessly throw away. Is it not so?

I could lie pleasantly awake any night to hear the beaters of *pekmez*, as I used to hear it in Phazimon. This sound being new to me I had to ask what it meant. I then learned that after thickening that juice of the white sweet grape by boiling, they were beating it to whiten the viscous sweet. A rhythmic and somnolent sound that could keep no man awake; if I heard it long it would be because of an illness of that time, which has its own part in this tale.

After that first zest of summer and the be-

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ginning of school, there had come upon me a malaise. Of this I did not complain; but friends, noting it, supposed that the confinement of study, or some such thing, was enfeebling me; or a sickness for home. They plied me with foods and such diversions as they knew, of which the best was to visit their *aykee* and gather for myself my fill of grapes. But one night as we returned somewhat late from the vineland, I was taken with the tremors of chill. My face was livid and my illness so plain that they made me remain at their home. After that there was dry heat, and discomfort, very great; but in the morning I thought myself well. However, these experiences were repeated, and the women of the house knew that I suffered from the "miasm of the marsh," which (it may be long afterwards) overtakes travellers who have slept at Samsun. They made for me an infusion of a bark which they called K'na-k'na. This relieved me so that I returned to the school. It was a right treatment but it could not cure, and the lingering residue of that malaise, or the sudden attack of illness which surprised me now and then, caused a weakening of my whole frame and a depression

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which, at that time, seemed to me a grievous ill. But for that trouble, however, and the obstinate return of all its signs, I should not have known the "*Madama*" Lennart, or not in so intimate a way.

It began to be rumored, after I had suffered some weeks, that the *Madama* knew of some remedy that would really cure. So it was determined that I should visit her home and benefit by whatever she might be willing to dispense.

Now that *Madama*, as you have doubtless heard, was one of the efficient women of your race. Not only did she know the methods we called "à la Frank," but added a personal effectiveness of her own. Therefore she in a moment understood the cause of my complaint and put in my hands the cure. By that I mean, she knew the nature of the disease which the Genoese—settlers of old upon this coast—called *mala aria*, "bad air"; and she knew that specific alkaloid which the Westerns prepare from that same bark which my friends used as they could. It is plain to me now that K'na-k'na is but the eastern mode of Cinchona, that precious tree that men used to seek in the dense forests of

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New Grenada or Peru, at such toil and pains, but which is now grown in the Nilgiri hills or in Ceylon, thanks to the enterprise of your race. A like enterprise has taught the essence of that bark to take its most potent form in the powder which the *Madama* supplied to me; and by the aid of that curious principle (which the capricious gods implanted in a tree in Peru), I was cured of the miasm of Samsun.

It was as if commerce and discovery were both mapped in the original Design. Least-wise the experience proved to me that this contact which was desired for me—this touch with the things of the West—was a real need. But for this dispensing by one of your kind I might have gone shivering to a tedious grave, with this malady draining my blood.

But the *Madama* became more than benefactress. She became my friend. Gratitude brought me again to her door, long after my cure had become assured, and her kindness bred new responses in my youthful heart.

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SHE was, as you know, of your soul-nobles, the best of your race. But since you recall her but as a child recalls, I will tell you more. Her dark hair and her strong features allied her to a type that I knew. That molding announced a character that was like the oak, that grapples with great roots the things that are secure. She was not beautiful as we use the word, though there was room for fineness, too, in that firmness of a woman's face. Her eyes, of course, were dark, and how alive! Not eagerly, but with a keen sympathy they regarded you—not with an aloofness of reserve.

She was one of those who do things, and do them well, though always without display. One that understood. You say tact. More than that is this knowledge which goes before and anticipates the things you can't say and but dimly feel.

In this respect she differed from her husband, who was good and *meant* better than he could fulfil. His was an acquired store of knowledge and a more lunar reflection of

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faith. These things do not vibrate with strength and beat upon the tympanum of the soul, upon its inner ear. The mind condescends to answer but the soul is left inert. It is a politeness of interchange. With her, a reviving flow. This I felt from the first day. Not knowing yet what it meant I went and went again, always finding my inner being reinforced.

Now with *the Reverend*, as we would say, her husband, it was an outer path we pursued. He could not forget that he was here as *meesee-onár*, and must let shine some light that he had. Not crudely, to be sure, but with a patent desire to enlighten my mind, he would lead to subjects pertinent to his faith.

Not so the *Madama*. If at all she touched on that point it would be to verify the fact of my own faith, and my response to the things I had received. Rather, however, she preferred, once she had brought relief to my physical frame, to find contentment and interest for my mind; and to me this was a living thing to do.

She asked me, after we had sat some time in her well-appointed room, (which itself brought messages to me of a kind I could

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feel better than I could understand,) if I had an interest in flowers. If so she would take me out of doors, to a fenced garden at the rear. Of course I replied that I cared a great deal for those things and, as she must have seen, my eyes were often upon the potted plants she had there in her sun-window, in the room.

So we went out, and at once I could see with what affection she had gathered the plants that would thrive in that place and bring to her a certain beauty of the earth which comes to us in no other way. This was no decorative scheme such as you see, or even an exploitation of the ground for cut flowers. For the first time in my life it began to dawn on me that such a place can be, first of all, for the cultivation of the heart. Now in all this, you may be sure, I was mute and could say nothing to her save that I liked this flower or that.

She was depreciating the time of the year, which revealed so little as compared to the spring. Those familiar composites were there which belong to old-fashioned gardens, in the fall, and for a time I was occupied with them, as a young person would be,

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for the colors were bright; but presently my eye was caught by a tenderer bloom, which lifted itself from the earth quite bare, unaccompanied by stem or leaf. This bloom came in clusters of a purple, very pale, which strangely affected my feelings, from the first. I was attracted, I was touched, as if a new presence had just been evoked from the ground. I asked the *Madama* questions, its name and reason for coming leafless from the ground.

"This," she said, "is a plant you ought to know. It is called Colchicum, from Colchis, a country through which you came on your way down to the sea. Its leaves are full of life and attain their strength in July; but after that they die down. They have given all that they had to the root and to the making of this flower, which rises now, as you see, and is an emanation of that verdure which was dead."

I exclaimed something. "Yes," she answered. "It is a wonder to me. It is a transformation. Like all beauty, it is a resurrection of some energy we thought dead."

I'm just giving the substance of her words, which were few. She was not given to talk-

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ing even so much as that, but she was pleased that I had noticed the fragile flower which most boys would have kicked with their feet, and so she betrayed an inner thought. But with or without her words, there, you know, is the flower, and who am I to say what it means? One or two there may be in the whole world who can convey the meaning of such a flower—not the lyric impulse which is like one beat of the senses, but that fast fragrance which is like music over the fields—Madame de Sélincourt; who else? She has done it, as you know, in her story, “Autumn Crocuses” (my *Colchicum* under a usual name), and that’s one of the rare stories of the world. Saying that I do not so much evaluate it as story-art, for in such evaluation meanings often turn to wood, but, I say, the value is there.

All this came to me little by little. There was, then, the stirring of wonder, and no clear consciousness of what it was about. But now, even the name *Colchicum* brings to me that garden, and the *Madama* in whose spirit was the bloom. This touches meanings of which men often fear to speak. They fear a softness, perhaps; I do not know. I will say

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plainly that to me the light on autumn crocuses has become a garment, an investiture for the soul. Such a garment one would like to be found worthy to wear, or to associate with those who do wear it.

This is not the effeminacy of flowers. The *Madama* had something I had not known: something which I supposed peculiar to her race. I was to learn that her race has as little of it as any—and also as much. It is the property of souls, not of nationalities.

It seems, sometimes, that the ancients had a greater fluency in these things. Seeing that they were closer to the elemental forces, experience became for them a *wearing of the earth*; or, if they could attain to it, the light, its envelope. They wore the earth as flax, or linen; and when they could they wore it as flowers. They wore the dawn itself as a light-garment, draping it freely about their lyric thoughts. All this time they were clothing, not so much their bodies (which required less attention) as their souls. They were nearer to the threshing-floors, and these, in turn, were nearer to the stars.

For this reason Bardesanes could write his beautiful "Hymn of the Soul." He lived, it is

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true, as late as the early Christian centuries, but, being a Chaldean, he was near to the tent-life and the flocks. He is said to have been exiled from his home and to have found refuge in the Araxes valley, where he preached to the Hayq.

I have said that I am in love with *a land*, and that the song of Lachesis is in my ears. That land, in the time of which I write, seemed to me to be geographical, a place easily found on the map, with names for its chief rivers, ports and plains. It now seems to me rather to have become a property of the soul, better approached through moods than through the motion of trains. Something is there, a limestone framework, blown upon by winds, and easily reached by the port of Samsun; but I have no desire to travel to that site, which would be to me like a deserted stage on a cold dawn. Its beauties would have vanished. The actors would have flown. All that ever mattered would be lacking: and the song.

Of the sirens who hymn the æons the legend says that their voice is heard in a single sound or note. Consonant with that thought the East carries under its mortal

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melodies a single note—the key, to which the rest is attuned. It is prone even to sound that while the variation is being played. A like inclination possesses me when I recall those melodic themes of birth and happiness that pervade the youth of the soul. My ear detects and delights in an inner note which is not the theme or melody but the key.

Soul is attuned.

“The spindle turns,” and why should it not? One does not want a static heaven. A retarded earth would soon stale. Yet one resists; that means friction—another name for pain. Meantime the siren sings. Those who can be utterly quiet may hear. I find it a pleasant note, an endurable key. It is the one monotone for which I can care. It seems concentric with that sphere where, without torpor, one finds ease, without languor a happiness. In this atmosphere, soul—that strange aspect of being which our positivists cannot analyze and deem it more convenient to deny—finds itself clothed. For music is the one garment which these doctors cannot refuse, since the true and inner music is not a matter of their concern. Perhaps they are not aware that it exists, or they dare not compromise

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themselves. This music is the drapery of the human soul.

To me the world has been a lyric experience darkened only by the threat of discord. There was a lyric of small flowers to whose colors I was keyed, so only I met them in the wild. I found them alive in the wheat—music and flame. The spindle turned—they were under the same “Necessity” to die as I was—but there was a song at their birth. I had not seen their corpses on herbarium shelves. Their bodies died where they had flamed, in the barley or wheat; but I did not mourn. I had clothed myself in the song. This seems a foolish thing to say, but it is as true as anything I know. I do not recant the saying, but only deplore that this lyric is not heard by more souls.

Flowers, skies and horizons are, in this view, garments rather than protagonists in space. This matches the view of that *maker* of the “Hymn” which I once very greatly desired to read. I found it after much search. This treasure was buried where none but a searcher among dead theologies would think to look for it. What use a theologian could ever make of it I do not know, or why—

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among the cast-off tackle by means of which they of other centuries sought to gear the universe—they hid and buried it I cannot surmise. It has life and breath. I will quote portions of this "Hymn of the Soul."*

When I was a little child,
And dwelling in my Kingdom in my Father's house,
And in the wealth and the glories
Of my nurturers had my pleasure,
From the East, our home,
My parents, having equipped me, sent me forth.
And of the wealth of our treasury
They had already tied up for me a load,
Large it was, yet light,
So that I might bear it unaided.

And they took from me the bright robe
Which in their love they had wrought for me,
And my purple toga,
Which was measured and woven to my stature,
And they made a compact with me,
And wrote it in my heart that it should not be forgotten:

"If thou goest into Egypt

* Usually printed with the Apocryphal Acts of St. Thomas, with which it has no connection and could hardly belong. The "Hymn" has long been attributed to Bardesanes, and there is no better hypothesis as to its authorship.

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And bringest the one pearl
Which is in the midst of the sea
Hard by the loud-breathing Serpent,
(Then) thou shalt put on thy bright robe
And thy toga, which is laid over it,
And with thy Brother, our next in rank,
Thou shalt be heir in our Kingdom."

I quitted the East and went down,
There being with me two messengers
For the way was dangerous and difficult
And I was very young to tread it.

I went down to Egypt,
And my companions parted from me.
I betook me straight to the Serpent,
Hard by his dwelling I abode,
(Waiting) till he should slumber and sleep,
And I could take my pearl from him.

And I put on a garb like theirs (the Egyptians)
Lest they should insult me because I had come from
afar,

To take away the pearl,
And (lest) they should arouse the Serpent against me.
But in some way or other
They perceived that I was not their countryman;
So they dealt with me treacherously,
Moreover they gave me their food to eat.
I forgot that I was a son of kings.
And I forgot the pearl.
I lay in a deep sleep.

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But all these things that befell me
My parents perceived and were grieved for me.
So they wrote me a letter . . .
It flew in the likeness of an eagle,
And became all speech.
At its voice and the sound of its rustlings
I started and arose from my sleep.

I remembered that I was a son of kings,
And my free soul longed for its natural state.
I remembered the pearl . . .
And I began to charm him,
The terrible loud-breathing Serpent. . . .
I snatched away the pearl
And turned to go back to my Father's house,
And their filthy and unclean garb
I stripped off and left it in their country,
And I took my way straight to come
To the light of our home, the East,
And my letter, my awakener,
I found on the road,
And as with its voice it had awakened me,
(So) too with its light it was leading me . . .
And with his (?) love was drawing me on. . . .

And my bright robe, which I had stripped off,
And the toga wherein it was wrapped,
From the heights of Hyrcania (?)
My parents sent thither,
By the hand of their treasurers

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Who in their faithfulness could be trusted there-
with . . .

Of a sudden I faced it,
The garment seemed to me like a mirror of myself.
I saw it all in my whole self,
Moreover I faced my whole self (facing) it,
For we were two in distinction
And yet again one in likeness . . .
And the image of the King of Kings
Was depicted all over it,
And like the sapphire stone also
Were the manifest hues.
Again I saw that all over it
The motions of knowledge were stirring
And as if to speak
I saw it also making itself ready . . .
And in its kingly motions
It was spreading itself toward me,
And in the hands of the givers
It hastened that I might take it . . .
I clothed myself therewith and ascended
To the gate of salutation and homage;
I bowed my head and did homage
To the Majesty of my Father who had sent it to me
For I had done his commandment
And he too had done what he promised,
And at the gate of princes
I mingled with his nobles;
For he rejoiced in me and received me,
And I was with him in his kingdom . . .
And he promised that also to the gate

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Of the King of Kings I should speed with him,
And bringing my gift and my pearl
I should appear with him before our King.*

It may seem an odd thing to be mingling this imagery of an Eastern with the thought-awakenings at Phazimon, or to link it with my memory of the *Madama*, who was a western contact to my mind; but I delight to do this thing. To begin with, the "Hymn" carries in it the idea of meeting with noble beings: and that was the essence of my experience with her. Further, it is concerned with the gaining of a fit investiture in which to appear before those who are worthy of gifts; and just this was the concern of right-minded persons before the age of decadence, and will be when that age is past.

Although Bardesanes has been for two thousand years "dead," he is still in advance of those who, in an era of disillusion, affect to believe that all the draperies of noble thought are mockeries; for he plainly shows that those draperies can be the mirror of the "whole self," and become so, once one has

* Translation by Prof. A. A. Bevan; the Cambridge Press, Cambridge University, England.

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performed the "commandment" for which he was sent. It is a simple conception, but those who must have complexities are easily lost in the mists.

I have to dwell a little on such points, because, long before I understood the matter, I began to know that sensation is not the true content of experience, and that *impulse* is not all the commandment one has to fulfil. I knew at that time nothing of Rousseau, and had barely heard of Aristotle; but I found that there is meaning in form, and that impulse, not clothed in comeliness, can be the wastrel of the mind. On the other hand I felt myself not only fed but fortified by the forms of thought which are not knowledge, but were brought to me almost by accident, at the schools. Gates were opened to me, into the lyric minds. I learned to read some Latin hymns. It was this way:

It happened the second year of my stay at the schools, when I had somewhat lost my fear of the dignified men in charge. I said to the *Badvelli*, a kindly man whose scholarship I perceived to be great: "What do they teach in the higher institutions of your land? How do they begin?"

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He told me that the foundation is Latin. I said to him, growing suddenly bold because of the pleasant nature of his glance, out of blue eyes, "Acquaint me with that tongue." And in place of discouraging me in any way he offered to hear me after the regular hours. So I began my "*Hic, haec, hoc*," and soon, to my surprise, I was understanding the meaning of lines of prose.

The "*Gallia est divisa . . .*" and what follows became mine, and it is no strange thing that I formed an affection for the Roman speech, because it always engages those who seek it by a natural impulse, as I had done, and rewards them, after but little pains. But the wonder to me is this, that even while I stumbled over the first obstacles of that road, my instructor should have put in my hand a book containing beauties of Latin verse, which it was his wish that I should learn. Indeed it took no urging from him; once I began them the music compelled me, and I gladly stored them in my mind. Often I repeat them even now.

For me whose boyish soul had fed on the churchly chant and the beauty of the *sharagan* there was an affinity in these venerable

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hymns, which shoulder the dignity of the world of faith and carry it where modern life throws it down. What I felt then was an emotion, not clear to me. It was the true and deep feeling of a simple friar, vibrating through a veil of centuries, to mine. All that was true and deep in me responded to the lines:

Stabat Mater dolorosa
Juxta crucem Lachrymosa
Qua pendebat Filius;
Cujus animam gementem,
Contristantem et dolentem,
Pertransivit gladius. . . .

Quis est homo qui non fleret
Matrem Christi si videret
In tanto supplicio?
Quis non posset contristari
Piam matrem contemplari
Dolentem con filio?

I learned, of course, the whole poem, and through it learned to see the most moving spectacle that has been dramatized, so far as I know.

That sentiment, it is true, approaches a softness, nevertheless a softness through which I think a man should pass.

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I learned the *Dies Irae*. There is little softness in that, although there is contrition. Great souls have passed over with its lines upon their lips, the closing lines of the hymn. But for me, as I am now strong to live, the first few stanzas; beside their magnificence what other utterances can you set? A translation is nothing. It is in the words, the Latin words themselves and no others. There the imagery was born, there the motion, the trembling in which the whole Cosmos is shaken to its depth. Is not this a gate, a door into new great chambers of the unseen world? That third stanza, matchless!

Tuba, mirum spargens sonum
Per sepulchra regionum
Coget omnes ante thronum.

—And the fourth!

Mors stupebit et natura
Quum resurget creatura
Judicanti responsura.

And such a door as this a courteous gentleman opened to me by the simple means of hearing a few lessons and putting into my hands a book of verse! I was the beneficiary,

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you see, of his leisure, just as I had been that of the *Madama* in respect to hers. Each of them had this precious thing to use, and each opened to me a different department of that inner world which is, after all, the dwelling-house of the soul, and for want of which some wander afflicted their whole life long; others for many years, because they can find no key.

So this was a good fortune to me, that already, long before I knew my need, I had access to wide domains in which it is possible to breathe. Do you wonder that I mention these things? Of what importance is an "affair" as you call it, with a girl, compared with the winning of beauties like these, that come and abide always in the household of your life, and never need ask for a divorce. If you neglect them your sin is against yourself, and they are always able to forgive.

Besides, we had no affairs with any girls. I have made it plain that this was even further from our thoughts, at Kanakir, than it would be in the towns you have known. That is where tradition does a kindness to youth, by diverting it from needless concerns of sex; though I grant it may be a detriment to romance. As for romance, that too is a habit of

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mind, an indulgence, perhaps a vice, with which some sound civilizations have found it possible to dispense.

But again, romance, in a sensible meaning of the word,—which I take to be love for beautiful experiences, or experience of the beautiful,—my life was full of that. But to read an American daily paper is a ghastly experience, and your countrymen embrace it twice a day. Therefore I do not see that they have much claim to a feeling for romance. Impressionability—that's another thing.

But for the solid background of my early living—the unforgettable dignity of my home at Kanakir—I should have been as impressionable as any. I should never have understood personal worth. But now, that had been stamped upon me with my mother's image, and with the simplicity of our ancestral ways. All those manners and inflections of courtesy were not a *rhetoric*: they were an interpretation of the relations of soul to soul.

I have a pleasant memory, to be sure, of handsome women of my race in Phazimon; of henna-tipped fingers, and of cheeks that had nature's decoration, glimpsed through some open door. These things did not occupy

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the mind of our youth. A corner for them, we could spare; as for the gracious attentions given by womankind to a guest. These softnesses had their place. But is it so strange, when one thinks of the currents that crossed our air, that we attended to other thoughts than those of romance?

In a life wholly underlaid by hostile forces, one does not think so much of illusory things.

In the quiet of my room I held my book close to the student lamp. My roommate wrote down exercises in a purple ink. The window was open to the night. A strange, beating sound, an insistent rhythm, came to us from across the *Chai*, or ravine, adjacent to the town: drum-beat of dervishes, a sound uncanny as they, emanating from their domed *takya*. We envisaged them whirling, repeating their word of hoarse breathing, falling, with froth at the mouth.

"What do they gain from that?" I asked my roommate.

"Ecstasy," he answered, listening. "The soul escaping from the body, for a breath, to feel free."

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"A strange way!"

"The best they know."

We found ourselves tolerant of that wretched fanatical form, the dervish, since in so grotesque a mold there's still a soul always struggling to escape.

Less easy on the nights of *Bairam* feast when sounds of revelry disordered the night and from the mosque or even the minaret some loud chant compelled us to wake. An alien chant. Religions seemed to be fighting in the air. It was a struggle with me, not to hate.

But I had seen the lights hung out after sunset, from the greater minaret to the west. I had heard the sunset call, plaintive, strong. The soul of man was speaking in that call, whatever the words. There was beauty in those lights. "The best they could do." I had to think of these things.

Those little lights round the gallery of the minaret, small against the still pale sky, might have been the sparks kindled by some light-maiden, a visitant in the plane of earth.

Allah is a hedonistic god who easily forgives if we follow pleasure with all our heart. He knows the frailty of our mind and

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is content if we are whole-hearted in what we do and uphold the One Faith and give alms. Allah knows the beauty of woman and the lure of her, but little of the beauty of the fields. It is when we walk abroad in the bright daylight and the night-chantings and lights and drum-beats are forgotten that we realize what we have, beyond that faith of crescent moons and the night.

Our *Asdvadz* is a god of the sun-lit world. He is at home in the fields. He understands the murmur of the doves and the warble of lesser birds; and they understand him. It is their *living praise*. If you ask one of us, "What is the song of birds?" the answer is just what I say: "*Gentanee parapanoutyun*"; a living praise.

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ONCE while convalescing from the fever I said to my friends, "I am dying for mountains. Here are some in sight, why don't we go?"

I was able to ride and we took horses for a Saturday. Already when we reached the scrub oak and felt the shoulder of the Tafshan Ridge under us my heart began to renew its full beat. It was like a whiff of home. We gained the crest and saw the hidden valleys beyond, where were streams and forest trees, not like the barren face this range turns to the Phazimon Plain. We descended a little way and asked refreshment at the *yailah* of a Kurd. This being a quiet time we feared nothing; also we knew that their chiefs, of whom this was one, are fine men if once their hospitality can be invoked.

This man made us sit in the shade and his women brought the best that they had; honey, and *kaimak*, with bread rolled thin for the *saj*. Now if one says "cream," one says nothing that has to do with this *kaimak* of the mountaineers. One must despair to de-

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scribe it, prepared with an art which is a tradition, nothing less, over the heat of coals; and with the faint, fragrant aroma, I should think, of the burning juniper which they use for fires.

While we ate of this delicacy he said to us, for pleasantry, "*Allah'n donghouzu s'n'z'*"—You are God's pigs; and if he meant by it that we, though we might be swine, were consuming a celestial food, his words were justified as regards the food.

Gladdened but not satisfied by this ride I began to ask where there might be a place to stay pleasantly for some nights. My friends said that there was one that they knew, in the valley of the Greeks, one day's ride. So, at the earliest possible occasion, there we repaired.

The Greeks, who have been here since no man knows when, have a little church, built boldly, to withstand storms. This stone edifice from its elevation commands the valley, and in its shelter are the winter homes of some families, also housing for guests; but, mercifully, there is no room for crowds. One sleeps there in a garment of quiet and wakes to find the mountain—and himself.

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Because I was tired from riding I slept long, and during the first day absorbed curiously the few sights of that place; as the simple church with its white interior walls and the wood-carved mystery which screens that place where the priest is accustomed to retire. Also at the bidding of my friends I compared the water of the springs by the church with that which issues from the great trees further on. For coldness—you know what we think of these things; how we value a clear, cold spring.

The Greeks also have the art of *kaimak*, and no man makes a better *matzoon*, which they call *xyghala*, or “sharp milk.” These things were agreeable to me, but my memories of that place are not so much the memories of food.

It is the waking.

The second day, I from some cause waked earlier than the rest. We had slept on an open gallery, not unlike that of my home, so that when I awoke I felt the cool air and the early shadow all around.

With a little care I dressed myself, rousing no one, and went out. I took a dash of water from the fountain by the church, upon

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my face and arms. Now I was on the mountain side, upon a little trail.

Silence, all around, but for that stream down below, whose voice is always there and has mingled with your being, with your blood.

Now some shafts of light have topped that Ak Dagh which lies so far at the opposing rim of the plain, and they are on the ledges of rock, and upon the scrub oak; but the sturdy little church with its red-tiled roof is still in shadow, like the glen.

It seems to me that I have lifted the latch of Morning and gone in, when no one guarded the door. Indeed, is not that the privilege of a boy who stumbles on the lost art of being alone?

I have only to close my eyes. It is all there, now. Not a thing to mourn, as if I had lost it, being no longer a boy; rather a thing to delight in, because I have it, and it cannot be lost.

That's a thing one can't announce to all the world, but one can freely say it to the few who have had knowledge of such things. Also, because only these will read the thing we venture to write, the secret is safe; safe

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from critical eyes. I'm just saying that, as a matter of fact, on such and such a day I found the Morning unguarded and walked in; and that what I found was Wonder; and, I'll add this too, also a prayer, of the sort known to the birds.

But I was going to say that, while I stood there on the trail, a girl came out of the homes of the Greeks and stood near me, with her eyes on the heights, where was a *yailah* of her friends. Small and distant it seemed to me, but she cupped a hand to her mouth and called:

"Stirka, O-O-O-O-O!"

and it was plain that her voice reached that height, for presently there was an answering call from Stirka, (which I suppose means Little Star,) and the girl near me sent her message, which was this:

"*Ghala, kai 'xyghala*, O-O-O-O-O."

The halloo at the end being meaningless I took it to be like a flourish of the pen, beautifying the figure made by the voice on that silence. And I'm sure that the instinct of those Greeks would be not to mar such a silence by any abrupt sound; and, too, that

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“O-O-O-O-O!” rounds and tapers off the sharp effort of the voice.

So that was the wireless telephone of these mountaineers; a beautiful instrument to hear and see, also inexpensive, you may be sure.

Afterwards I visited that *yailah* from which Stirka was to bring the milk and “sharp milk,” and I also visited many others in the high pastures far beyond, at later time, in midsummer when the families move there; besides seeing them in their winter homes. And no one can tell me, after all that I observed, that the life of a peasant need be dreadfully hard; at least not in the mountains. No. For I looked attentively into their faces, and no hardness was written there. Indeed I can see those faces now, and what I see is a kindly life without doubtings or desperations, or undue stress of soul. They have had a wholesome activity, with their hands, and they have had clear water, and the peace of their Church; a repose for their soul.

Some of their men quarry stone for the towns, a few of their boys work in the mines; otherwise their living is all from the hills, where their flocks graze; and it is enough.

When I returned to the school a new term

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was ready to take up, and I entered with a real zest into that work. For a time I thought less of mountains than of duties, and was absorbed in languages, figures and the like. *K'n'tyun*, or the final examinations, were at that time almost a display, and a showing must be made, so I toiled. Also I wrote letters to my home.

We were drilled and produced a finished proof of the forms of knowledge we had acquired, in which all took a pride. Complacent to the spirit of the school I had an interest in what I read, though the forms seem somewhat wooden to me now. At that time I am sure that I would not have guessed that the acquirement over which I struggled so hard, and which even cost me a little sleep, (owing to the fever and its lingering effects,) would seem to me, one day, like a pattern of blocks on which are stamped letters, arranged as words; but that the songs I learned without effort would forever sing; flowers, that some scarcely noticed, bloom forever in my garden-soul, and waters flow perennially from a mountain spring. No, I wouldn't have dreamed such a thing. Those so little things have been the ones that fertilized my whole

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life, while the toy blocks of learning were long ago packed away and cannot even be used again, for now one demands better blocks.

Long after that I had a similar experience in the higher learning, toward which, as I've told you, I already aspired. In your western universities I acquired of it sufficient to enable me to earn my bread; but all the time my soul was subsisting on those shreds of meaning that your scholars throw away—some faint fragrance from the *Madama's* garden, or her mind-touch in relation to those flowers; the undying inflection of a chant, Lusavorchagan; sonorous lines from *Dies Irae*, or some other Latin gem; the sound of water in a fountain by the mountain church; Stirka's name in a beautiful call—all such "little" things as these, of which I've told you, feeling that the telling is in confidence because no one can possibly care to hear a tale built on gossamers like these. Threads, indeed, of the frailest; but they were my clues; always they led me back to a Lifted Land, reaching which I could breathe. I was Theseus, saved from the Labyrinth by that white, flax film which

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Ariadne gave him, that he might retrace his steps out of the maze. Ariadne is the personification of spring. A personification, did I say? Wait! She might be more than that. Who do you suppose gave *me* that thread to follow back, if not the spirit that is she? I tell you, I'd just as soon believe that the spirit that is Ariadne, came to those plains looking for some person who'd accept her clues and found me. A Pagan thought, if you please, but I like it. We need a few *Christian* myths like that of the Greeks to fill out our scheme.

But to be truthful, I didn't much estimate these values at that time.

There is the case of the *Tcherkess*, Khamur. How gladly would he have received me to his home, had I valued such a thing. Indeed he asked me to come, but for some reason too trivial to recall, I let that chance slide. Now I must regret it; I'll tell you why.

Now he was a man. The *Tcherkess* are a beautiful race, but this Khamur was a sterner cast than most. His face had the dark hue of exposure and also the shadow that falls from war. His tribe had fought under Shamyl in days long ago, when the Briton

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was his ally, against the Russ. The Lesghians fell, Shamyl—despite his courage and his miraculous escapes—was held at last by Baryatinski, the Prince. His followers melted, the tribe dispersed. Tcherkess, Abkhasian and other tribes left the Caucasus and many of them found refuge around Phazimon. Self-exiled, they left their fertile valley to become a waste, because they believed the prophet Shamyl and would not endure the Russ.

These men are lovers of their home, and while we feared them at first when, quite desperate, they sought maintenance in a strange land, once established in mountains similar to their own, they showed a stability and a friendship we admired. It was this quality that endeared to me Khamur. We had engaged him as a guard, travelling over lonely roads, and we found in him a companion and friend. In his dark countenance there was no fear, and he grasped life's nettles firmly enough each day; yet you found in him the simplicity of a child, and that response which satisfies the heart. Just think what it would have been to me to visit his home. For with those people hospitality is the chief gift.

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Can't you imagine that dark face alight as Khamur Agha leads you to an honored place under his roof, and converses while coffee is brought to boil on the hearth? Afterwards there will be a feast of all that his wife can prepare (one wife, you know, for the Tcherkess) and good will which is better than wine. Again the comfort of the sedir, pipes, stories, until all are willing to retire. Don't you know, friend, that we should have lighted there a flame that could never go out, and by which I might have warmed me again and again?

He said "Come to my village; be my guest"—that was all, and I have not been; yet the potency of that message from the dark man's heart was so strong that it is with me still, as if it yet applied, and I could visit him in that mountain home, his door always expectant of my knock.

But it had been my privilege to travel with Khamur, as I mentioned, over mountain roads; long hours spent on some tedious ascent. I never heard him complain. I could see in his face tolerance for all things, whether of nature or the incalculable mind. It was not torpor. Behind the shadow and

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rigor of his facial mold I could see the glow of flame, a quiet burning of the heart. Where did he acquire that flame? It is the best there is in a man, and without it his body is a husk from which the kernel has been removed. A better than Prometheus gave him it, I'm sure.

We had chosen a different route to my home, because there was disorder in the valley of the Rion, near Batoum. With Trebizond as our port we disembarked that summer—it was late in June—and followed the *chaussée*, which had been built, as you remember, for the armies in a recent war.

For a little while we were in the shadow of Boz Depe, by the coast; then we turned inland and followed a swirling stream by whose side we were soon lost in deep valleys away from the coast—deep valleys, walled by tall cliffs, with now and then an open view of hills. The valleys grow narrower, the cliffs more high, which with their front carved into columns or crags begin to threaten the sky. Yet there is no gloom in the valley of Deirmen, for there are soft spaces for gardens and the paths of green cling high upon

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the ascent toward the cliff. For here are the children of the Hellenes, near whose homes a garden will always be found, which they have the skill to feed and keep, no matter on what slant of the ground. And near—but a sharp ride of three hours, perhaps, from our road—is their monastery of Sumelas, a beauty and a wonder for all who see. How its many-storied, windowed walls hang to the declivity and are there secure, as a swallow's nest against the cliff! Such is the splendor of the impulse in man, who, building for his own aspiration, builds for all. This hidden beauty, which is known to fame, I point out to you only because I like to think that such things, though far from the "world" are not lost, but have a meaning for us who know the secrets of a Lifted Land. And this Sume-las, isn't it just one more proof that beauty always lies hidden in the heart of the Greeks and must flower, even so far from their ancestral home?—From that edifice, its base, there is a fall of eight hundred feet to the torrent hissing below; and besides the gardens, there is in this gorge a natural verdure whose density almost obscures the light of day—lime and alder trees, with azalea and

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holly for underwood, and Colchicum upon the ground; a luxuriance and also a weirdness as of the days of the Grecian myths.

One might go up that valley of Meiriman by Kazikly Dagħ to Baiburt, but we were to keep to the chaussées, and the long climb to the Zigana pass.

Close your eyes. Forget the little details of space and miles. You are on those mountain slopes that face always the Pontic winds, and though you do not see the sea, it is present there, to a faint sense; and to a like sense the azalea responds, which has left the shelter of the gorges and climbs with you up the long incline. You have slept, and now it is morning, and you are again upon the way. From thickets around the stream bed you hear the sound of waterfalls, and a tremulous murmur from the little streams. Drink of these things and say no word, for there is no better ministration for your soul. It is not too long, to the pass.

Beyond that pass you shall see stretches of barren ground, a staring yellow, terraced and ridged; a vastness of expanse, savage indeed, across the valley of the Kharsut and to

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the dim outline of Giaour Dagħ, capped by cloud.

This valley of the Kharsut is but a desolate place, a mote that stands between our proper country and the sea. In it no verdure is to be seen except the willows that border the stream, where also a few irises bloom. But it is no great journey, and after it comes the Vavuk Pass, which is the gate, the western gate, to our land. Not, as you know, to the Aras valley, but to the tableland of Hayasdan.

A new climate, a new air, a wide and undulant plain. At our feet a slow-flowing river on whose banks wild buttercups grow. At the first the plain will be bare, but beyond this near circuit of the eye are soft and verdant downs, high-hidden on this table of the world. On these downs the forget-me-nots grow, so that there rises a pale shimmer of blue, which is a harmony of our land.

Should I speak to you of Erzerum? A mere city. We pass it by, and presently we have reached Egri Chai, which means nothing until I discover its true name; but this rivulet of the upland plain is to me the river

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of rivers, Aras, no less: the "Mother Araxes" of our national songs.

This river avoids the Aghri divide by choosing a way to the north; but we follow that crest for a time, to escape the difficulties our Aras must meet; and now we see it laboring with its encumbrances, the rocky parapets and gloomy valleys through which it must pass. In time it survives all its difficulties, and we ours: we meet at last in the wideness above Erivan.

A greenness of orchards and gardens, seen from the distance, on coming home—who can describe it? It is then that the spirit of the land rises to meet you in a light and a tenderness that is its own. Things you never knew are now known to you, and once known they are never to be forgotten. These are not dead vibrations or the mark of them: they are Remembered Light; just as reality might be termed God's memory of things, so these are recalled only to be found real. I want no past tense, to describe to you these things. They are present enough to me, and will be, I think, to those who are able to share the happy faith that these things, having been, *still are*. And even your science admits this,

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that no component force or ether-wave can be lost. It admits but is unable to use it. We use all that and more.

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IN my home I found nothing shrunken of the things that I knew. The dignity and the welcome were both there. Embraces, yes, and of questions not a few; but mainly a shining of the eyes by which more is revealed than through words. In our speech we recognize this, for we have a saying "Light to your eyes"; a pleasant thing to say at all times, and especially good to say to a mother when her son has returned, after an absence of nearly a year, safe and whole.

More safe, indeed, than my mother knew; for, far from having my person or my faith undermined at that school, I had established foundations of which neither of my parents could know. And yet, as I've tried to make plain, it wasn't directly the work of the school, but those minor things which are not reckoned worthy of mention by the learned ones of the world. They had been but incidents along the way—like those things in the journey, of which I spoke, of which a topographer could have nothing to say.

So I could satisfy both of my parents in

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regard to my faith, and I entered into the life of my home. With a good heart I ate again our pilau from the common dish, and with a quiet mind slept on our gallery, near the stars. I sat sometimes in the stores, but more often was in the garden, where I gathered the fruit. There, too, I was often under a walnut tree where the shade was deepest, not far from that "Feeding Water" which supplied our grove. The walnut husk was green at that time, and bruising it—impatient to see the meat grow hard and sweet—I soiled my hands. In the branches of the tree I sometimes saw that eastern bird you call "golden," bright among the leaves. He is an oriole, but such a color as his is not gold—that cheapens it—it is the glory that gold might aspire to be if ever it were endowed with a soul. It is a pure lustre from light, through the yellow, carried to some finer diffusion through the plumage of that bird, through barbule and barb, interlocked, interlaced, a maze in which the mere pigment is lost.

Such a bird I once held in my hand—the body I mean, from which the spark had just gone—and wondered that men should have

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power given them to deface that shrine; for an ignorant man of the fields had made of it a mark, and I had it from him for a few paras. Strange, isn't it?

But I was saying, I sat sometimes in the shade, and was idle: what we call idleness, "wasted time." I think that during that idleness fluids are pressed into fine channels which are the pattern-molds for our unspoken mind, and that so we weave the garment for our soul. Lustre and sheen, they come later, as the garment is mature.

But having made the garment, it is *that* we must wear, and not another; so much of my life has been this same "wasted time."

I could tell you little incidents of feasts, or betrothals, or the visit to Echmiadzin; but these things are away from my theme, more, it seems to me, a childish memory and of interest merely curious. Since there must be—as between us, we understand—a vast hiatus between those days and these, I will, with the reader's permission, tell what I think of this period, of which a radiance has emerged.

If one wants some time to bridge that gap and pass from the place of radiant days through a violence of pain and gloom, it may

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be done. But for me, the transition is full of painful events, of which we do not care even to speak. Some of my race, it is true, would have me recall them, with their bitterness, that vengeance may be called from its hiding-place, still hoping to retrieve some shred of all that is lost; but rather, if it can be done, we let those things fall into the oblivion which is their proper abode.

I shall not linger further on the scenes of my home. I shall not dwell on the hardships of uprootings and journeys west, or of the long and severe disciplines which I endured that I might know the sciences of the West and those applications by means of which I have made my mind useful to your efficient world, which, in turn, maintains me according to my needs. The strange thing about it all, and the only thing worth mentioning, it seems to me, is that through it I have been able to maintain that connection which now I renew, with a world in which wonder is quite at home—a world of which few travellers give us much news, and yet it is no city-in-the-air such as poor peasants dream of and gild in fancy according to their desire.

Childhood is a little island in that world.

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Some radiance is there, but the space is small. A tiny garden will suffice, if butterflies come; and the mustards just outside the door stretch to a wilderness beyond ken. But it isn't of childhood that I now speak. Neither is it the torrential time of youth, when the blood speaks louder than the mountain streams, and the mind is too restless to hear the voices of birds unless it can weave them into some passion-music of its own. There is a little space between; and that space you may easily fill with the pranks and the foolishness of an age which copies whatever it sees, and seeing no dignity of life, but only cartoons, becomes itself the small caricature of a trivial or a scheming adult. Perhaps in cities these things must be. But give it some dignity of traditions, some background of beauty, some wider garden, and easily a better experience may emerge.

I have dwelt somewhat at length on these things: why? One may see for one's self that there is a special time, a period in the life of a man, when such matters as I have narrated are in the nature of events. They are more than events: they are illuminations, contacts with the real. And this time is not *youth*, as

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we use the word; it is that little stretch between childhood and puberty when the eyes are clear and the blood is cool, and the soul sits at the threshold of a great door. That door, for most, will presently be shut, and may not open again in the life of that man. Or, if the miasmas on this side are already strong upon him he may not hear what there is to hear; but if he be ever so little clean and quiet in his young heart he can hear the sounds that come to him through that door, and across that threshold he can see what thereafter may be veiled to his eyes.

If then he has seen the sights within and heard those sounds, they will return to him again and again, but always in quiet hours; by them he will know that the jangle and din of this market-place we call the world is but an outer thing, and all its stresses of little account.

Do you suppose he is ever going to say of them, sighing while he says it: "Ah, yes, there was a glamour over that time, indeed; but those were childish things, doomed to fade. Experience shows them to have been false. Now I know by long tests that this is a maddening world, its lights tinsel, its joys

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a Barmecide feast; bitterness for all; the end a blank. Let us foster illusions while we may, and seek anodynes rather than joy”?

If he does, he knows little of that time or that experience of which I speak.

Now I would count it a sorry thing to be mourning that time of “when I was a boy,” as some of your finest writers have done; as if it were something once enjoyed but now forever lost. The beauty of that experience can’t be gauged till it is over with—so far as age is concerned. For the boy goes through it half in dreams; but later—after the stresses of middle age, the buffetings of youth, have wrenched the fibers of his being, they recur and are the harvest of his quiet hours.

Of this harvest the *substance* can’t be credited to age, but only the maturing. The stuff of it is the stuff of youth—of childhood, if you like—made articulate with the ripening of the mind. Change that essence, that impulse, that poetic insight that creates real values and the thing is dead. The living mind is essentially young.

Homer was the true poet, the child, and so the verities are in his lines. He gives us the new-born earth. But must we ask Homer

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kindly to summon for us his Dawn, because we have lost the power to see it for ourselves?

Why no, if you ask me, we must not. We have had the good fortune to be, once, alive; we shall be alive again. If strife is on the wind we may step aside, as just now we've done in the quiet of our room, to read these lines. With no turn of magic, but simply with the closing of the outer eyes we have gone apart. And what have we found? The cool mountains; the shadow of mornings in remote glens; water, from deep sources in the ground; voices of birds; light in faces; the lyric light of flowers.

Rather than adventures we have pursued meanings, and so life has become an adventure *of the whole*, and with vistas beyond.

And I would add this: there are further light and further listenings for later years; but for me, I will say that none of these could have come but by the path made ready in that earlier time. The boy found a light-path and a vestibule for sound over which new harmonies are coming and will come. These are all from that same source, I suppose. They belong to the land of which I have

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tried to bring you some breath out of that adventureless time.

The waves of passion beat but faintly on the shores of that early Land.—Passion, that's a stormy thing. Cytherea, you know, arose from the sea. Sirens are natural to the shore. Calypso hid the Wanderer in ocean caves. Thetis was a nymph. That note of iteration, resurgence, which is the erotic note, dies away before it can reach the tableland of which we know. There the air is clear of desire. It is a different air, friendly to blue florets and the snow.

I knew a girl of the Hayq. She is the daughter of my friends. I hope that some day she will tell of the experiences through which she has passed; for there is nothing there to injure her modesty of demeanor, her reserve; and there is much that you would care to know.

Remember, she was gently bred, and reared as your sister might be. It was not a light thing which she endured, to be driven away with the stricken hordes, the remnant of our race, afoot and wanderers to the cen-

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tral plain; the plain of exile, of exposure to thirst and heat by day, of exposure to thieves and dogs by night. Yet she endured. Straws of kindness blew past her on the desert wind. She caught at these clues. By that means she found approach to the heart of a Kurd. And this man, being powerful and a chief, might have done with her as he pleased. But he refrained. He gave her safety and perfect sanctuary in his train.

Remember, I am telling the truth. This is no romance invented out of my mind. This young woman, beautiful, and of marriageable age, appealed to the integrity of this man; and he, being a Moslem, and under no law respecting a woman he might desire, revered her appeal. He placed her upon a horse, under guard, and led her away from those pitiless plains. This man, though a Kurd and therefore used to traditions of cruelty and unrestraint, put his fear upon his relatives and all with whom they had to do; so that, although a captive, she might have been his guest. In this way she found herself being lifted day by day from the plain of wanderings, and carried beyond those barren hills of its environs to the far re-

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treats; travelling in safety, whether by day or by night, upward and ever upward from that plain. Thus she came at last to the mountains, far inland, where the secrets of God are preserved. There she breathed that life-giving air and her eyes saw the blessed greenness of the upland downs. In her ears were the voices of little streams, and of that she spoke most often, telling of those days: "m'r-m' r-al," the murmur of streams.

She spoke too of the green "savannahs" which they reached, very high and far from known places and caravan routes. On these the Kurds pastured their herds of small cattle, with which children might play. She spoke of hard tasks for the women, and the labors in which she shared. She spoke of the justice and clemency of that chief, who treated her as a daughter, not for months but for years, till peace was restored and he could escort her to safety, as she desired.

Always in her narrative there recurred the mention of clear mountain springs, and the sound of little streams, the murmuring of rivulets in valleys lost to the world.

So it seemed to me, hearing that tale, it is not just the physical thing, the soothing

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ministration that she heard, but in it is the prophecy of the thing-to-be; a blending of harmonies in some high plane; her maidenhood, a holiness in the heart of that Kurd, and a Beauty that was binding all. That brings us, you see, to the point where we begin to know that our Island is not lost in time or hidden in space, but only lifted to a plane where it is invisible to gross eyes. The young of heart and the juvenal of imagination may reach it at any time.

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